Forty Hadith

AYATULLAH SAYYID IMAM RUHALLAH AL-MUSAWI AL-KHOMEINI

An Exposition on 40 ahadith narrated through the Prophet (saww) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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An Exposition on Forty Ahadith Narrated through the Prophet and His Ahl al-Bayt, may peace be upon themDetailed commentary on ٤٠ selected traditions narrated through the Prophet (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a) on topics of ethics and spirituality, including .jihad al-nafs

.Second revised edition

Introductory Note

The original work in Persian, recently published under the title "Arba'in, ya chihil hadith" was written by Imam al-Khumayni forty-six years ago and was completed in

.(the month of Muharram ۱۳۵۸ (April-May, ۱۹۳۹

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About The Author

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(By Hamid Algar(۱

It is in many ways remarkable that ten years after his death

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۱ - English-born Hamid Algar received his Ph.D. in oriental studies from Cambridge. Since ۱۹۶۵, he has served on the faculty of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he teaches Persian and Islamic history and philosophy. Dr. Algar has written extensively on the subject of Iran and Islam, including the books Religion and State in Iran, ۱۷۸۵-۱۹۰۶ and Mirza Malkum Khan: A Biographical Study in Iranian Modernism. He has been following the Islamic movement in Iran with interest for many years. In an article published in ۱۹۷۲, he assessed the situation there and forecast the Revolution "more accurately than all the U.S. government's political officers and intelligence analysts," in the words of Nicholas Wade, Science magazine. Dr. Algar has translated numerous books from Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, including the book Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini.

and twenty years after the triumph of the revolution that he led no serious, comprehensive biography of Imam Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni has yet been written, whether in Persian or any other language. He was, after all, the pre-eminent figure of recent Islamic history, for his impact, considerable enough in Iran itself, has also reverberated throughout much of the Muslim world and helped to transform the .worldview and consciousness of many Muslims

Indeed, it may be precisely this magnitude of the Imam's achievement, together with the complexity of his spiritual, intellectual, and political personality that has so far discouraged potential biographers. The materials available for the task are, however, as abundant as his accomplishments were varied, and the present writer hopes to .take up the challenge in the near future

What follows is therefore nothing more than a preliminary sketch, intended to acquaint the reader with the outlines of the Imam's life and the main aspects of his .person as an Islamic leader of exceptional stature

Childhood and Early Education

Ruhullah Musawi Khumayni was born on ۲۰ Jamadi al-Akhir ۱۳۲۰/ ۲۴ September ۱۹۰۲, the anniversary of the birth of Hazrat Fatima, in the small town of Khumayn, some ۱۶۰ kilometers to the southwest of Qum. He was the child of a family with a long tradition of religious scholarship. His ancestors, descendants of Imam Musa al-Kazim, the seventh Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, had migrated towards the end of the eighteenth .century from their original home in Nishapur to the Lucknow region of northern India

There

they settled in the small town of Kintur and began devoting themselves to the religious instruction and guidance of the region's predominantly Shi'i population. The most celebrated member of the family was Mir Hamid Husayn (d. ۱۸۸۰), author of 'Abaqat al-Anwar fi Imamat al-A'immat al-Athar, a voluminous work on the topics traditionally disputed by Sunni and Shi'i Muslims.(۱)

Imam Khumayni's grandfather, Sayyid Ahmad, a contemporary of Mir Hamid Husayn, left Lucknow some time in the middle of the nineteenth century on pilgrimage to the tomb of Hazrat 'Ali in Najaf.(۲) While in Najaf, Sayyid Ahmad made the acquaintance of a certain Yusuf Khan, a prominent citizen of Khumayn.

Accepting his invitation, he decided to settle in Khumayn to assume responsibility for the religious needs of its citizens and also took Yusuf Khan's daughter in marriage. Although Sayyid Ahmad's links with India were cut by this decision, he continued to be known to his contemporaries as "Hindi," an appellation, which was inherited by his descendants; we see even that Imam Khumayni used "Hindi" as penname in some of his ghazals.(۳)

Shortly before the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in February ۱۹۷۸, the Shah's regime attempted to use this Indian element in the Imam's family background to depict him as an alien and traitorous element in Iranian society, an attempt that as will be seen backfired on its author. By the time of his death, the date of which is unknown, Sayyid Ahmad had fathered two children: a daughter by the name of

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۱- See Muhammad Riza Hakimi, Mir Hamid Husayn, Qum, ۱۳۶۲ Sh./۱۹۸۳.

۲- However, according to a statement by the Imam's elder brother, Sayyid Murtaza Pasandida, his point of departure was Kashmir, not Lucknow; see 'Ali Davani, Nahzat-i Ruhaniyun-I Iran, Tehran, n.d., VI, p. ۷۶۰.

۳- See Divan-I Imam, Tehran, ۱۳۷۲ Sh./۱۹۹۳, p. ۵۰.

.Sahiba, and Sayyid Mustafa Hindi, born in ۱۸۸۵, the father of Imam Khumayni

Sayyid Mustafa began his religious education in Isfahan with Mir Muhammad Taqi Mudarrisi before continuing his studies in Najaf and Samarra under the guidance of Mirza Hasan Shirazi (d.۱۸۹۴), the principal authority of the age in Shi'i jurisprudence. This corresponded to a pattern of preliminary study in Iran followed by advanced study in the 'atabat, the shrine cities of Iraq, which for long remained normative; Imam Khumayni was in fact the first religious leader of prominence whose formation .took place entirely in Iran

In Dhu'l-Hijja ۱۳۲۰/ March ۱۹۰۳, some five months after the Imam's birth, Sayyid Mustafa was attacked and killed while traveling on the road between Khumayn and the neighboring city of Arak. The identity of the assassin immediately became known; it was Ja'far-quli Khan, the cousin of a certain Bahram Khan, one of the richest landowners of the region. The cause of the assassination is, however, difficult to establish with certainty. According to an account that became standard after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, Sayyid Mustafa had aroused the anger of the local .landowners because of his defense of the impoverished peasantry

However, Sayyid Mustafa himself, in addition to the religious functions he fulfilled, was also a farmer of moderate prosperity, and it is possible that he fell victim to one of the disputes over irrigation rights that were common at the time. A third explanation is that Sayyid Mustafa, in his capacity of shari'a

judge of Khumayn, had punished someone for a public violation of the fast of Ramadan and that the family of the offender then exacted a deadly revenge.(۱)

The attempts of Sahiba, Sayyid Mustafa's sister, to have the killer punished in Khumayn proved fruitless, so his widow, Hajar, went to Tehran to appeal for justice, according to one account carrying the infant Ruhullah in her arms. She was followed there by her two elder sons, Murtaza and Nur al-Din, and finally, in Rabi' al-Awwal ۱۳۲۳/ May ۱۹۲۵, Ja'far-quli Khan was publicly executed in Tehran on the orders of 'Ayn al-Dawla, the prime minister of the day.

In ۱۹۱۸, the Imam lost both his aunt, Sahiba, who had played a great role in his early upbringing, and his mother, Hajar. Responsibility for the family then devolved on the eldest brother, Sayyid Murtaza (later to be known as Ayatullah Pasandida). The material welfare of the brothers seems to have been ensured by their father's estate, but the insecurity and lawlessness that had cost him his life continued. In addition to the incessant feuds among landowners, Khumayn was plagued by the raids mounted on the town by the Bakhtiyari and Lurr tribesmen whenever they had the chance.

Once when a Bakhtiyari chieftain by the name of Rajab 'Ali came raiding, the young Imam was obliged to take up a rifle together with his brothers and defend the family home. When recounting these events many years later, the Imam remarked, "I have been at war since

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۱- Interview of the present writer with Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini, son of the Imam, Tehran, ۱۲ September, ۱۹۸۲.

my childhood."(۱) Among the scenes, he witnessed during his youth and that remained in his memory to help shape his later political activity mention may also be made of the arbitrary and oppressive deeds of landowners and provincial governors. Thus, he recalled in later years how a newly arrived governor had arrested and bastinadoed the chief of the merchants' guild of Gulpaygan for no other purpose than the (intimidation of its citizens.(۲

Imam Khumayni began his education by memorizing the Qur'an at a maktab operated near his home by a certain Mullah Abu 'l-Qasim; he became a hafiz by the age of seven. He next embarked on the study of Arabic with Shaykh Ja'far, one of his mother's cousins, and took lessons on other subjects first from Mirza Mahmud Iftikhar al-'Ulama' and then from his maternal uncle, Hajji Mirza Muhammad Mahdi. His first teacher in logic was Mirza Riza Najafi, his brother-in-law. Finally, among his instructors in Khumayn mention may be made of the Imam's elder brother, Murtaza, who taught him Najm al-Din Katib Qazvini's al-Mutawwal on badi' and ma'ani and one .of the treatises of al-Suyuti on grammar and syntax

Although Sayyid Murtaza - who took the surname Pasandida after the law mandating) the choice of a surname in ۱۹۲۸ - studied for a while in Isfahan, he never completed the higher levels of religious education; after working for a while in the registrar's .(office in Khumayn, he moved to Qum where he was to spend the rest of his life

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.Imam Khomeini, Sahifa-yi Nur, Tehran, ۱۳۶۱ Sh., /۱۹۸۲, X p. ۶۳ -۱

.Sahifa-yi Nur, XVI, p. ۱۲۱ -۲

Sayyid Murtaza sent the Imam to the city of Arak (or Sultanabad, as it ,۱۳۳۹/۱۹۲۰-۲۱ was then known) in order for him to benefit from the more ample educational resources available there. Arak had become an important center of religious learning because of the presence of Ayatullah ‘Abd al-Karim Ha’iri (d.۱۹۳۶), one of the principal scholars of the day. He had arrived there in ۱۳۳۲/۱۹۱۴ at the invitation of the townspeople, and some three hundred students - a relatively large number - .attended his lectures at the Mirza Yusuf Khan Madrasa

It is probable that Imam Khumayni was not yet advanced enough to study directly under Ha’iri; instead, he worked on logic with Shaykh Muhammad Gulpayagani, read the Sharh al-Lum’a of Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-Amili (d. ۹۹۶/۱۵۵۸), one of the principal texts of Ja’fari jurisprudence, with Aqa-yi ‘Abbas Araki, and continued his study of al-Mutawwal with Shaykh Muhammad ‘Ali Burujirdi. Roughly a year after the Imam’s arrival in Arak, Ha’iri accepted a summons from the Ulama of Qum to join them and .preside over their activity

One of the earliest strongholds of Shi’ism in Iran, Qum had traditionally been a major center of religious learning as well as pilgrimage to the shrine of Hazrat-I Ma’suma, a daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazim, but it had been overshadowed for many decades by the shrine cities of Iraq with their superior resources of erudition. The arrival of Ha’iri in Qum not only brought about a revival of its madrasas but also began a process whereby

the city became in effect the spiritual capital of Iran, a process that was completed by .the political struggle launched there by Imam Khumayni some forty years later

The Imam followed Ha’iri to Qum after an interval of roughly four months. This move was the first important turning point in his life. It was in Qum that he received all his advanced spiritual and intellectual training, and he was to retain a deep sense of identification with the city throughout the rest of his life. It is possible, indeed, although not in a reductive sense, to describe him as a product of Qum. In ۱۹۸۰, when addressing a group of visitors from Qum, he declared, “Wherever I may be, I am a citizen of Qum, and take pride in the fact. My heart is always with Qum and its people.”(۱)

The Years of Spiritual and Intellectual Formation in Qum, ۱۹۲۳ To ۱۹۶۲

After his arrival in Qum in ۱۹۲۲ or ۱۹۲۳, the Imam first devoted himself to completing the preliminary stage of madrasa education known as sutuh; this he did by studying with teachers such as Shaykh Muhammad Riza Najafi Masjid-i Shahi, Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khwansari, and Sayyid ‘Ali Yasribi Kashani. However, from his early days in Qum, the Imam gave an indication that he was destined to become more than another great authority on Ja’fari jurisprudence. He showed an exceptional interest in subjects that not only were usually absent from the madrasa curriculum, but were often an object of hostility and suspicion: philosophy, in its various traditional schools, .(and Gnosticism (‘irfan

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۱- Sahifa-yi Nur, XII, p. ۵۱.

began cultivating this interest by studying the Tafsir-i Safi, a commentary on the Qur’an by the Sufistically-inclined Mullah Muhsin Fayz-i Kashani (d.۱۰۹۱/۱۶۸۰), together with the late Ayatullah ‘Ali Araki (d. ۱۹۹۴), then a young student like himself. His formal instruction in gnosticism and the related discipline of ethics began with classes taught .by Hajji Mirza Javad Maliki-Tabrizi, but this scholar died in ۱۳۰۴/۱۹۲۵

Similarly, the Imam was not able to benefit for long from his first teacher in philosophy, Mirza ‘Ali Akbar Hakim Yazdi, a pupil of the great master Mullah Hadi Sabzavari (d.۱۲۹۵/۱۸۷۸), for Yazdi passed away in ۱۳۰۵/۱۹۲۶. Another of the Imam’s early instructors in philosophy was Sayyid Abu ‘l-Hasan Qazvini (d. ۱۳۵۵/۱۹۷۶), a scholar of both peripatetic and illuminationist philosophy; the Imam attended his circle until .Qazvini’s departure from Qum in ۱۳۱۰/۱۹۳۱

The teacher who had the most profound influence on Imam Khumayni’s spiritual development was, however, Mirza Muhammad ‘Ali Shahabadi (d. ۱۳۲۸ Sh. /۱۹۵۰); to him the Imam refers in a number of his works as shaykhuna and ‘arif-I kamil, and his .relationship with him was that of a murid with his murshid

When Shahabadi first came to Qum in ۱۳۰۷ Sh. /۱۹۲۸, the young Imam asked him a question concerning the nature of revelation, and was captivated by the answer he received. At his insistent request, Shahabadi consented to teach him and a few other select students the Fusus al-Hikam of Ibn ‘Arabi. Although the basis of instruction was Da’ud Qaysari’s commentary on the Fusus, the

Imam testified that Shahabadi also presented his own original insights on the text. Among the other texts that Imam Khumayni studied with Shahabadi were the Manazil al-Sa'irin of the Hanbali Sufi, Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari (d.۴۸۲/۱۰۸۹), and the Misbah al-Uns of Muhammad b. Hamza Fanari (d. ۸۳۴/۱۴۳۱), a commentary on the Mafatih al-Ghayb of Sadr al-Din Qunavi (d. ۶۷۳/۱۲۷۴).

It is conceivable that the Imam derived from Shahabadi, at least in part, whether consciously or not, the fusion of gnostic and political concerns that came to characterize his life. For this spiritual master of the Imam was one of the relatively few ulama in the time of Riza Shah to preach publicly against the misdeeds of the regime, and in his Shadharat al-Ma'arif, a work primarily gnostic in character, described Islam as "most certainly a political religion."(۱)

Gnosis and ethics were also the subject of the first classes taught by the Imam. The class on ethics taught by Hajji Javad Aqa Maliki Tabrizi were resumed, three years after his death, by Shahabadi, and when Shahabadi left for Tehran in ۱۹۳۶, he assigned the class to Imam Khumayni. The class consisted in the first place of a careful reading of Ansari's Manazil al-Sa'irin, but ranged beyond the text to touch on a wide variety of contemporary concerns.

It proved popular to the extent that the townsfolk of Qum as well as the students of the religious sciences attended, and people are related to have come from as far a field as Tehran and

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۱- Shadharat al-Ma'arif, Tehran, ۱۳۶۰ Sh./۱۹۸۲, pp. ۶-۷.

Isfahan simply to listen to the Imam. This popularity of the Imam's lectures ran contrary to the policies of the Pahlavi regime, which wished to limit the influence of the ulama outside the religious teaching institution. The government therefore secured the transfer of the lectures from the prestigious location of the Fayziya madrasa to the Mullah Sadiq madrasa, which was unable to accommodate large .crowds

However, after the deposition of Riza Shah in ۱۹۴۱, the lectures returned to the Fayziya madrasa and instantly regained their former popularity. The ability to address the people at large, not simply his own colleagues within the religious institution, which the Imam displayed for the first time in these lectures on ethics, was to play an .important role in the political struggles he led in later years

While teaching ethics to a wide and diverse audience, Imam Khumayni began teaching important texts of gnosis, such as the section on the soul in al-Asfar al-Arba'a of Mullah Sadra (d. ۱۰۵۰/۱۶۴۰) and Sabzavari's Sharh-I Manzuma, to a select group of young scholars that included Murtaza Mutahhari and Husayn 'Ali Muntaziri, who subsequently became two of his principal collaborators in the revolutionary .movement he launched some three decades later

As for the earliest writings of the Imam, they also indicate that his primary interest during his early years in Qum was gnosis. In ۱۹۲۸, for example, he completed the Sharh Du'a' al-Sahar, a detailed commentary on the supplicatory prayers recited throughout Ramadan by Imam Muhammad al-Baqir; as with all

Imam Khumayni's works on gnosis, the terminology of Ibn 'Arabi is frequently encountered in this book. Two years later, he completed Misbah al-Hidaya ila 'l-Khilafa wa 'l-Wilaya, a dense and systematic treatise on the main topics of gnosis. Another product of the same years of concentration on gnosis was a series of glosses .on Qaysari's commentary on the Fusus

In a brief autobiography written for inclusion in a book published in ۱۹۳۴, the Imam wrote that he spent most of his time studying and teaching the works of Mullah Sadra; that he had for several years been studying gnosis with Shahabadi; and that at (the same time he was attending the classes of Ayatullah Ha'iri on fiqh.(۱

The sequence of these statements suggests that fiqh was as yet secondary among his concerns. This situation was to change, but gnosis was for the Imam never simply a topic for study, teaching, and writing. It remained an integral part of his intellectual and spiritual personality, and as such infused many of his ostensibly political activities .in later years with an unmistakably gnostic element

The Imam did not engage in any overt political activities during the ۱۹۳۰'s. He always believed that the leadership of political activities should be in the hands of the foremost religious scholars, and he was therefore obliged to accept the decision of Ha'iri to remain relatively passive toward the measures taken by Riza Shah against the traditions and culture of Islam in Iran. In any event, as a still junior figure in

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.Sayyid 'Ali Riza Yazdi Husayni, Aina-yi Danishvaran, Tehran, ۱۳۵۳/۱۹۳۴, pp. ۶۵-۷ -۱

the religious institution in Qum, he would have been in no position to mobilize popular .opinion on a national scale

He was nonetheless in contact with those few ulama who did openly challenge Riza Shah, not only Shahabadi, but also men such as Hajji Nurullah Isfahani, Mirza Sadiq Aqa Tabrizi, Aqazada Kifai, and Sayyid Hasan Mudarris. He expressed his own opinions of the Pahlavi regime, the leading characteristics of which he identified as oppression and hostility to religion, as yet only allusively, in privately circulated poems.(۱)

He assumed a public political stance for the first time in a proclamation dated ۱۵ Urdibihisht ۱۳۲۳/ ۴ May ۱۹۴۴ that called for action to deliver the Muslims of Iran and the entire Islamic world from the tyranny of foreign powers and their domestic accomplices. The Imam begins by citing Qur'an, ۳۴:۴۶ ("Say: 'I enjoin but one thing upon you, that you rise up for Allah, in pairs and singly, and then reflect'"). This is the same verse that opens the chapter on awakening (bab al-yaqza) at the very beginning of Ansari's Manazil al-Sa'irin, the handbook of spiritual wayfaring first taught to the Imam by Shahabadi. The Imam's interpretation of "rising up" is, however, both spiritual and political, both individual and collective, a rebellion against .lassitude in the self and corruption in society

The same spirit of comprehensive revolt inspires the first work written by the Imam for publication, Kashf al-Asrar (Tehran, ۱۳۲۴ Sh. /۱۹۴۵). He is said to have completed the book in forty-eight days

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۱- Sayyid Hamid Ruhani, Barrasi va Tahlili az Nahzat-I Imam Khumayni, I, Najaf, n.d., pp. ۵۵-۹.

from a sense of urgency, and that it indeed met a need is proven by the fact that it .went through two impressions in its first year

The principal aim of the book, as reflected in its title, was to refute 'Ali Akbar Hakamizada's Asrar-i Hazarsala, a work calling for a "reform" of Shi'i Islam. Similar attacks on Shi'i tradition were being made in the same period by Shari'at Sanglaji (d.۱۹۴۴), an admirer of Wahhabism despite that sect's marked hostility to Shi'ism, and Ahmad Kasravi (d. ۱۹۴۶), competent as a historian but mediocre as a thinker. The Imam's vindication of such aspects of Shi'i practice as the mourning ceremonies of Muharram, pilgrimage (ziyara) to the tombs of the Imams, and the recitation of the supplicatory prayers composed by the Imams, was therefore a response to the .criticisms made by all three

Imam Khumayni connected their assaults on tradition with the anti-religious policies of Riza Shah and bitterly criticized the Pahlavi regime for destroying public morality. He stopped short, however, of demanding the abolition of the monarchy, proposing instead that an assembly of competent mujtahids should choose "a just monarch who will not violate God's laws and will shun oppression and wrongdoing, who will not (transgress against men's property, lives, and honor."(۱

Even this conditional legitimacy of monarchy was to last "only so long as a better system could not be established."(۲) There can be no doubt that the "better system" already envisaged by Imam Khumayni in ۱۹۴۴ was Wilayat al-faqih, which

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.Kashf al-Asrar, p. ۱۸۵ -۱

.Kashf al-Asrar, p. ۱۸۶ -۲

became the constitutional cornerstone of the Islamic Republic of Iran established in .١٩٧٩

When Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Ha'iri died in ١٩٣۶, the supervision of the religious institution in Qum had been jointly assumed by Ayatullah Khwansari, Ayatullah Sadr, and Ayatullah Hujjat. A sense of lack was nonetheless felt. When Ayatullah Abu 'l-Hasan Isfahani, the principal marja'-i taqlid of the age residing in Najaf, died in ١٩۴۶, the need for a centralized leadership of Shi'i Muslims became more felt more acutely, and a search began for a single individual capable of fulfilling the duties and functions of both Ha'iri and Isfahani. Ayatullah Burujirdi, then resident in Hamadan, was seen to be the most suitable person available, and Imam Khumayni is said to have played an .important role in persuading him to come to Qum

In this he was no doubt motivated in part by the hope that Burujirdi would adopt a firm position vis-a-vis Muhammad Riza Shah, the second Pahlavi ruler. This hope was to remain largely unfulfilled. In April ١٩۴٩, Imam Khumayni learned that Burujirdi was engaged in negotiations with the government concerning possible emendations to the constitution then in force, and he wrote him a letter expressing his anxieties about the possible consequences. In ١٩۵۵, a nationwide campaign against the Baha'i sect was launched, for which the Imam sought to recruit Burujirdi's support, but he had little .success

As for religious personalities who were militantly active in the political sphere at the time, notably Ayatullah Abu 'l-Qasim Kashani and Navvab

Safavi, the leader of the Fida'iyan-i Islam, the Imam's contacts with them were sporadic and inconclusive. His reluctance for direct political involvement in this period was probably due to his belief that any movement for radical change ought to be led by the senior echelons of the religious establishment. In addition, the most influential personage on the crowded and confused political scene of the day was the secular .nationalist, Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq

Imam Khumayni therefore concentrated during the years of Burujirdi's leadership in Qum on giving instruction in fiqh and gathering round him students who later became his associates in the movement that led to the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime, not only Mutahhari and Muntaziri, but younger men such as Muhammad Javad Bahonar .and 'Ali Akbar Hashimi-Rafsanjani

In ۱۹۴۶, he began teaching usul al-fiqh at the kharij level, taking as his text the chapter on rational proofs from the second volume of the Kifayat al-Usul of Akhund Muhammad Kazim Khurasani (d. ۱۳۲۹/۱۹۱۱). Initially attended by no more than thirty students, the class became so popular in Qum that five hundred were in attendance .the third time it was offered

According to the reminiscences of some of those who took the class, it was distinguished from other classes taught in Qum on the same subject by the critical spirit the Imam instilled in his students, as well as his ability to connect fiqh with all the .other dimensions of Islam - ethical, gnostic, philosophical, political, and social

The Years of Struggle And Exile, ۱۹۶۲–۱۹۷۸

The emphases of the Imam's

activity began to change with the death of Burujirdi on March ٣١, ١٩۶١, for he now emerged as one of the successors to Burujirdi's position of leadership. This emergence was signaled by the publication of some of his writings on fiqh, most importantly the basic handbook of religious practice entitled, like others of its genre, Tauzih al-Masa'il. He was soon accepted as marja'-i taqlid by a large number of Iranian Shi'is. His leadership role was, however, destined to go far beyond that traditional for a marja'-i taqlid and to attain a comprehensiveness unique in the .history of the Shi'i ulama

This became apparent soon after the death of Burujirdi when Muhammad Riza Shah, secure in his possession of power after the CIA-organized coup of August ١٩۵٣, embarked on a series of measures designed to eliminate all sources of opposition, actual or potential, and to incorporate Iran firmly into American patterns of strategic .and economic domination

In the autumn of ١٩۶٢, the government promulgated new laws governing elections to local and provincial councils, which deleted the former requirement that those elected be sworn into office on the Qur'an. Seeing in this a plan to permit the infiltration of public life by the Baha'is, Imam Khumayni telegraphed both the Shah and the prime minister of the day, warning them to desist from violating both the law of Islam and the Iranian Constitution of ١٩٠٧, failing which the ulama would engage in a sustained campaign of protest. Rejecting all compromise measures, the Imam was

able to force the repeal of the laws in question seven weeks after they had been promulgated. This achievement marked his emergence on the scene as the principal .voice of opposition to the Shah

A more serious confrontation was not long in coming. In January ۱۹۶۳, the Shah announced a six-point program of reform that he termed the White Revolution, an American-inspired package of measures designed to give his regime a liberal and progressive facade. Imam Khumayni summoned a meeting

of his colleagues in Qum to press upon them the necessity of opposing the Shah's plans, but they were initially hesitant. They sent one of their number, Ayatullah .Kamalvand, to see the Shah and gauge his intentions

Although the Shah showed no inclination to retreat or compromise, it took further pressure by Imam Khumayni on the other senior ulama of Qum to persuade them to decree a boycott of the referendum that the Shah had planned to obtain the .appearance of popular approval for his White Revolution

For his own part, Imam Khumayni issued on January ۲۲, ۱۹۶۳ a strongly worded declaration denouncing the Shah and his plans. In imitation, perhaps, of his father, who had taken an armored column to Qum in ۱۹۲۸ in order to intimidate certain outspoken ulama, the Shah came to Qum two days later. Faced with a boycott by all the dignitaries of the city, he delivered a speech harshly attacking the ulama as a .class

On January ۲۶, the referendum was held, with a low turnout that reflected

the growing heed paid by the Iranian people to Imam Khumayni's directives. He continued his denunciation of the Shah's programs, issuing a manifesto that also bore the signatures of eight other senior scholars. In it he listed the various ways in which the Shah had violated the constituent, condemned the spread of moral corruption in the country, and accused the Shah of comprehensive submission to America and Israel: "I see the solution to lie in this tyrannical government being removed, for the crime of violating the ordinances of Islam and trampling the constitution, and in a government taking its place that adheres to Islam and has concern for the Iranian nation."(۱) He also decreed that the Nauruz celebrations for the Iranian year ۱۳۴۲ (which fell on March ۲۱, ۱۹۶۳) be cancelled as a sign of protest against government .policies

The very next day, paratroopers were sent to the Fayziya madrasa in Qum, the site where the Imam delivered his public speeches. They killed a number of students, beat and arrested a number of others, and ransacked the building. Unintimidated, the Imam continued his attacks on the regime. On April ۱, he denounced the persistent silence of certain apolitical ulama as "tantamount to collaboration with the tyrannical regime," and one day later proclaimed political neutrality under the guise of taqiya to (be haram.(۲

When the Shah sent his emissaries to the houses of the ulama in Qum to threaten them with the destruction of their homes, the Imam reacted contemptuously by referring

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, I, p. ۲۷ -۱

.Kauthar, I, p. ۶۷; Sahifa-yi Nur, I, p. ۳۹ -۲

to the Shah as "that little man (mardak)." Then, on April ۳, ۱۹۶۳, the fortieth day after the attack on the Fayziya madrasa, he described the Iranian government as being determined to eradicate Islam at the behest of America, Israel, and himself as .resolved to combat it

Confrontation turned to insurrection some two months later. The beginning of Muharram, always a time of heightened religious awareness and sensitivity, saw demonstrators in Tehran carrying pictures of the Imam and denouncing the Shah in front of his own palace. On the afternoon of 'Ashura (June ۳, ۱۹۶۳), Imam Khumayni delivered a speech at the Fayziya madrasa in which he drew parallels between the Umayyad caliph Yazid and the Shah and warned the Shah that if he did not change his ways the day would come when the people would offer up thanks for his departure (from the country.(۱

This warning was remarkably prescient, for on January ۱۶, ۱۹۷۹, the Shah was indeed obliged to leave Iran amidst scenes of popular rejoicing. The immediate effect of the Imam's speech was, however, his arrest two days later at ۳ o'clock in the morning by .a group of commandos who hastily transferred him to the Qasr prison in Tehran

As dawn broke on June ۳, the news of his arrest spread first through Qum and then to other cities. In Qum, Tehran, Shiraz, Mashhad and Varamin, masses of angry demonstrators were confronted by tanks and ruthlessly slaughtered. It was not until six days later that order was

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, I, p. ۴۶ -۱

fully restored. This uprising of ۱۵ Khurdad ۱۳۴۲ (the day in the Iranian calendar on which it began) marked a turning point in Iranian history.

Henceforth the repressive and dictatorial nature of the Shah's regime, reinforced by the unwavering support of the United States, was constantly intensified, and with it the prestige of Imam Khumayni as the only figure of note - whether religious or secular - willing to challenge him. The arrogance imbuing the Shah's policies also caused a growing number of the ulama to abandon their quietism and align themselves with the radical goals set forth by the Imam. The movement of ۱۵ Khurdad may therefore be characterized as the prelude to the Islamic Revolution of ۱۹۷۸-۷۹; the goals of that revolution and its leadership had already been determined.

After nineteen days in the Qasr prison, Imam Khumayni was moved first, to the 'Ishratabad military base and then to a house in the Davudiya section of Tehran where he was kept under surveillance. Despite the killings that had taken place during the uprising, mass demonstrations were held in Tehran and elsewhere demanding his release and some of his colleagues came to the capital from Qum to lend their support to the demand. It was not, however, until April ۷, ۱۹۶۴ that he was released, no doubt on the assumption that imprisonment had tempered his views and that the movement he had led would quietly subside.

Three days after his release and return to Qum, he dispelled such illusions by

refuting officially inspired rumors that he had come to an understanding with the Shah's regime and by declaring that the movement inaugurated on ۱۵ Khurdad would continue. Aware of the persisting differences in approach between the Imam and some of the other senior religious scholars, the regime had also attempted to discredit him by creating dissension in Qum. These attempts, too, were unsuccessful, for early in June ۱۹۶۴ all the major ulama put their signatures to declarations .commemorating the first anniversary of the uprising of ۱۵ Khurdad

Despite its failure to sideline or silence Imam Khumayni, the Shah's regime continued its pro-American policies unwaveringly. In the autumn of ۱۹۶۴, it concluded a status of forces agreement with the United States that provided immunity from prosecution for all American personnel in Iran and their dependents. This occasioned the Imam to deliver what was perhaps the most vehement speech of the entire struggle against the Shah; certainly one of his close associates, Ayatullah Muhammad Mufattih, had (never seen him so agitated.(۱

He denounced the agreement as a surrender of Iranian independence and sovereignty, made in exchange for a $۲۰۰ million loan that would be of benefit only to the Shah and his associates, and described as traitors all those in the Majlis who voted (in favor of it; the government lacked all legitimacy, he concluded.(۲

Shortly before dawn on November ۴, ۱۹۶۴, again a detachment of commandos surrounded the Imam's house in Qum, arrested him, and this time took him directly to Mehrabad airport

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۱- Interview with the present writer, Tehran, December ۱۹۷۹.

۲- Kauthar, I, pp. ۱۶۹-۱۷۸.

in Tehran for immediate banishment to Turkey. The decision to deport rather than arrest Imam Khumayni and imprison him in Iran was based no doubt on the hope that in exile he would fade from popular memory. Physical elimination would have been fraught with the danger of an uncontrollable popular uprising. As for the choice of Turkey, this reflected the security cooperation existing between the Shah's regime .and Turkey

The Imam was first lodged in room ۵۱۴ of Bulvar Palas Oteli in Ankara, a moderately comfortable hotel in the Turkish capital, under the joint surveillance of Iranian and Turkish security officials. On November ۱۲, he was moved from Ankara to Bursa, where he was to reside another eleven months. The stay in Turkey cannot have been congenial, for Turkish law forbade Imam Khumayni to wear the cloak and turban of the Muslim scholar, an identity which was integral to his being; the sole photographs (in existence to show him bareheaded all belong to the period of exile in Turkey.(۱

However, on December ۳, ۱۹۶۴, he was joined in Bursa by his eldest son, Hajj Mustafa Khumayni; he was also permitted to receive occasional visitors from Iran, and was supplied with a number of books on fiqh. He made use of his forced stay in Bursa to compile Tahrir al-Wasila, a two-volume compendium on questions of jurisprudence. Important and distinctive are the fatwas this volume contains, grouped under the .'headings of al-amr bi 'l-ma'ruf wa 'l-nahy 'an al-munkar and difa

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.See Ansari, Hadis-I Bidari, p. ۶۷ -۱

decrees, for example, that “if it is feared that the political and economic domination (by foreigners) over an Islamic land will lead to the enslavement and weakening of the Muslims, then such domination must be repelled by appropriate means, including passive resistance, the boycott of foreign goods, and the abandonment of all dealings and association with the foreigners in question.” Similarly, “if an attack by foreigners on one of the Islamic states is anticipated, it is incumbent on all Islamic states to repel the attack by all possible means; indeed, this is incumbent on the Muslims as a whole.”(۱)

On September ۵, ۱۹۶۵, Imam Khumayni left Turkey for Najaf in Iraq, where he was destined to spend thirteen years. As a traditional center of Shi’i learning and pilgrimage, Najaf was clearly a preferable and more congenial place of exile. It had moreover already functioned as a stronghold of ulama opposition to the Iranian monarchy during the Constitutional Revolution of ۱۹۰۶-۱۹۰۹. But it was not in order to accommodate the Imam that the Shah arranged for his transfer to Najaf.

First, there was continuing disquiet among the Imam’s followers at his forced residence in Bursa, away from the traditional milieu of the Shi’i madrasa; such objections could be met by moving him to Najaf. Second, it was hoped that once in Najaf, the Imam would either be overshadowed by the prestigious ulama there, men such as Ayatullah Abu ‘l-Qasim Khu’i (d. ۱۹۹۵), or that he would challenge their distaste for political activism

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۱- Tahrir al-Wasila, I, p. ۴۸۶.

.and squander his energies on confronting them

He skirted this dual danger by proffering them his respect while continuing to pursue the goals he had set himself before leaving Iran. Another pitfall he avoided was association with the Iraqi government, which occasionally had its own differences with the Shah's regime and was of a mind to use the Imam's presence in Najaf for its own purposes. The Imam declined the opportunity to be interviewed on Iraqi television soon after his arrival, and resolutely kept his distance from succeeding Iraqi .administrations

Once settled in Najaf, Imam Khumayni began teaching fiqh at the Shaykh Murtaza Ansari madrasa. His lectures were well attended, by students not only from Iran but also from Iraq, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf states. In fact, a mass migration to Najaf from Qum and other centers of religious learning in Iran was proposed to the Imam, but he advised against it as a measure bound to depopulate .Qum and weaken it as a center of religious guidance

It was also at the Shaykh Murtaza Ansari madrasa that he delivered, between January ۲۱ and February ۸, ۱۹۷۰, his celebrated lectures on Wilayat al-faqih, the theory of governance that was to be implemented after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution. (The text of these lectures was published in Najaf, not long after their delivery, under the title Wilayat al-faqih ya Hukumat-i Islami; a slightly abbreviated Arabic translation soon followed). This theory, which may be summarized as the assumption by suitably

qualified ulama of the political and juridical functions of the Twelfth Imam during his occultation, had already been put forward, somewhat tentatively, in his first published .work, Kashf al-Asrar

Now he presented it as the self-evident and incontestable consequence of the Shi'i doctrine of the Imamate, citing and analyzing in support of it all relevant texts from the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S)(١) and the Twelve Imams (A)(٢) He emphasized also the harm that had come to Iran (as well as other Muslim countries) from abandoning Islamic law and government and relinquishing the political realm to the enemies of Islam. Finally, he delineated a program for the establishment of an Islamic government, laying particular stress on the responsibilities of the ulama to transcend their petty concerns and to address the people fearlessly: "It is the duty of all of us to overthrow the taghut, the illegitimate political powers that now rule the (entire Islamic world."(٣

The text of the lectures on Wilayat al-faqih was smuggled back to Iran by visitors who came to see the Imam in Najaf, as well as by ordinary Iranians who came on pilgrimage to the shrine of Hazrat 'Ali (A) The same channels were used to convey to Iran the numerous letters and proclamations in which the Imam commented on the events that took place in his homeland during the long years of exile. The first such document, a letter to the Iranian ulama assuring them of the ultimate downfall of the Shah's

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١- For maintaining readability, (S) which is an acronym for "Salla (a)llahu alayhi wa aalihi wa sallam" is used throughout the book to denote "May peace and benedictions .of God be upon him and his family." It is used for Prophet Muhammad

٢- For maintaining readability, (A) which is an acronym for "Alayhi (alayhim) al-salaam" is used throughout the book to denote "May peace of God be upon him/her/them." It is .used for the Prophets, Imams, and saints

٣- .Wilayat al-faqih, Najaf, n.d., p. ٢٠۴

regime, is dated April ۱۶, ۱۹۶۷. On the same day he also wrote to prime minister Amir 'Abbas Huvayda accusing him of running "a regime of terror and thievery."(۱)

On the occasion of the Six Day War in June ۱۹۶۷, the Imam issued a declaration forbidding any type of dealing with Israel as well as the consumption of Israeli goods. This declaration was widely and openly publicized in Iran, which led to the ransacking of Imam Khumayni's house in Qum and the arrest of Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khumayni, his second son, who had been living there. (Some of the unpublished works of the Imam were lost or destroyed on this occasion.)

It was also at this time that the Shah's regime contemplated moving the Imam from Iraq to India; a location from which communications with Iran would have been far more difficult, but the plan was thwarted. Other developments on which the Imam commented from Najaf were the extravagant celebrations of ۲۵۰۰ years of Iranian monarchy in October ۱۹۷۱ ("it is the duty of the Iranian people to refrain from participation in this illegitimate festival"); the formal establishment of a one-party system in Iran in February ۱۹۷۵ (the Imam prohibited membership in the party, the Hizb-i Rastakhiz, in a fatwa issued the following month); and the substitution, in the same month, of the imperial (shahanshahi) calendar for the solar Hijri calendar that had been official in Iran until that time. Some developments were met with fatwas rather than proclamations: for

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۱- Sahifa-yi Nur, I, pp. ۱۲۹, ۱۳۲.

example, the Imam rejected as incompatible with Islam the Family Protection Law of ۱۹۶۷ and classified as adulteresses women who remarried after obtaining a divorce (under its provisions.(۱

Imam Khumayni had also to deal with changing circumstances in Iraq. The Ba'th Party, fundamentally hostile to religion, had come to power in July ۱۹۶۷ and soon began exerting pressure on the scholars of Najaf, both Iraqi and Iranian. In ۱۹۷۱, as Iraq and Iran entered a state of sporadic and undeclared war with each other, the Iraqi regime began expelling from its territory Iranians whose forebears had in some cases been residing there for generations. The Imam, who until that point had scrupulously kept his distance from Iraqi officialdom, now addressed himself directly .to the Iraqi leadership condemning its actions

Imam Khumayni was, in fact, constantly, and acutely aware of the connections between Iranian affairs and those of the Muslim world in general and the Arab lands in particular. This awareness led him to issue from Najaf a proclamation to the Muslims of the world on the occasion of the hajj in ۱۹۷۱, and to comment, with special frequency and emphasis, on the problems posed by Israel for the Muslim world. The Imam's strong concern for the Palestine question led him to issue a fatwa on August ۲۷, ۱۹۶۸ authorizing the use of religious monies (vujuh-i shar'i) to support the nascent activities of al-Asifa, the armed wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization; this was confirmed by a similar and more detailed ruling issued

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.Imam Khomeini, Risala-yi Ahkam, p. ۳۲۸ -۱

(after a meeting with the Baghdad representative of the PLO.(۱

The distribution in Iran, on however limited a scale, of the proclamations and fatwas of Imam Khumayni was in itself enough to ensure that his name not be forgotten during the years of exile. Equally important, the movement of Islamic opposition to the Shah's regime that had been inaugurated by the uprising of ۱۵ Khurdad continued .to develop despite the brutality unhesitatingly dispensed by the Shah

Numerous groups and individuals explicitly owed their allegiance to the Imam. Soon after his exiling there came into being an organization called Hay'atha-yi Mu'talifa-yi Islami (the Allied Islamic Associations), headquartered in Tehran but with branches throughout Iran. Active in it were many who had been students of the Imam in Qum and who came to assume important responsibilities after the revolution, men such as Hashimi-Rafsanjani and Javad Bahunar. In January ۱۹۶۵, four members of the organization assassinated Hasan 'Ali Mansur, the prime minister who had been .responsible for the exiling of the Imam

There were no individuals designated, even clandestinely, as Imam Khumayni's .authorized representatives in Iran while he was in exile

However, senior ulama such as Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Bihishti (d. ۱۹۸۱), and Ayatullah Husayn 'Ali Muntaziri, were in contact with him, directly and indirectly, and were known to speak on his behalf in important matters. Like their younger counterparts in the Hay'atha-yi Mu'talafa-yi Islami, all three went on to perform important functions during and after the .revolution

The continued growth of

.Sahifa-yi Nur, I, pp. ۱۴۴-۵ -۱

the Islamic movement during Imam Khumayni's exile should not be attributed exclusively to his abiding influence or to the activity of ulama associated with him. Important, too, were the lectures and books of 'Ali Shari'ati (d. ۱۹۷۷), a university-educated intellectual whose understanding and presentation of Islam were influenced by Western ideologies, including Marxism, to a degree that many ulama regarded as dangerously syncretistic. When the Imam was asked to comment on the theories of Shari'ati, both by those who supported them and by those who opposed them, he discreetly refrained from doing so, in order not to create a division within the .Islamic movement that would have benefited the Shah's regime

The most visible sign of the persisting popularity of Imam Khumayni in the pre-revolutionary years, above all at the heart of the religious institution in Qum, came in June ۱۹۷۵ on the anniversary of the uprising of ۱۵ Khurdad. Students at the Fayziya madrasa began holding a demonstration within the confines of the building, and a sympathetic crowd assembled outside. Both gatherings continued for three days until they were attacked on the ground by commandos and from the air by a military .helicopter, with numerous deaths resulting

The Imam reacted with a message in which he declared the events in Qum and similar disturbances elsewhere to be a sign of hope that "freedom and liberation from the bonds of imperialism" were at hand.(۱) The beginning of the revolution came .indeed some two and a half years later

The Islamic Revolution, ۱۹۷۸–۷۹

The chain of events

.Sahifa-yi Nur, I, p. ۲۱۵ -۱

that ended in February ۱۹۷۹ with the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime and the foundation of the Islamic Republic began with the death in Najaf on October ۲۳, ۱۹۷۷ of Hajj Sayyid Mustafa Khumayni, unexpectedly and under mysterious circumstances. This death was widely attributed to the Iranian security police, SAVAK, and protest meetings took place in Qum, Tehran, Yazd, Mashhad, Shiraz, and Tabriz. Imam Khumayni himself, with the equanimity he customarily displayed in the face of personal loss, described the death of his son as one of the "hidden favors" (altaf-i khafiya) of God, and advised the Muslims of Iran to show fortitude and hope.(۱)

The esteem in which Imam Khumayni was held and the reckless determination of the Shah's regime to undermine that esteem were demonstrated once again on January ۷, ۱۹۷۸ when an article appeared in the semi-official newspaper Ittila'at attacking him in scurrilous terms as a traitor working together with foreign enemies of the country. The next day a furious mass protest took place in Qum; it was suppressed by the security forces with heavy loss of life. This was the first in a series of popular confrontations that, gathering momentum throughout ۱۹۷۸, soon turned into a vast revolutionary movement, demanding the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime and the installation of an Islamic government.

The martyrs of Qum were commemorated forty days later with demonstrations and shop closures in every major city of Iran. Particularly grave were the disturbances in Tabriz, which ended only after more than ۱۰۰ people

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۱- Shahidi digar az ruhaniyat, Najaf, n.d., p. ۲۷.

had been killed by the Shah's troops. On March ۲۹, the fortieth day after the killings in Tabriz was marked by a further round of demonstrations, in some fifty-five Iranian cities; this time the heaviest casualties occurred in Yazd, where security forces opened fire on a gathering in the main mosque. In early May, it was Tehran itself that saw the principal violence; armored columns appeared on the streets for the first .time since June ۱۹۶۳ in order to contain the trend to revolution

In June, the Shah found it politic to make a number of superficial concessions - such as the repeal of the "imperial calendar" -to the forces opposing him, but repression also continued. When the government lost control of Isfahan on August ۱۷, the army assaulted the city and killed hundreds of unarmed demonstrators. Two days later, ۴۱۰ people were burned to death behind the locked doors of a cinema in Abadan, and the .government was plausibly held responsible

On 'Id al-fitr, which that year fell on September ۴, marches took place in all major cities, with an estimated total of four million participants. The demand was loudly voiced for the abolition of monarchy and the foundation of an Islamic government under the leadership of Imam Khumayni. Faced with the mounting tide of revolution, .the Shah decreed martial law and forbade further demonstrations

On September ۹, a crowd gathered at the Maydan-i Zhala (subsequently renamed Maydan-i Shuhada') in Tehran was attacked by troops that had blocked all exits

from the square, and some ۲۰۰۰ people were killed at this location alone. Another ۲۰۰۰ were killed elsewhere in Tehran by American-supplied military helicopters hovering overhead. This day of massacre, which came to be known as Black Friday, marked the point of no return. Too much blood had been spilt for the Shah to have any hope of survival, and the army itself began to tire of the task of slaughter.

As these events were unfolding in Iran, Imam Khumayni delivered a whole series of messages and speeches, which reached his homeland not only in printed form but also increasingly on tape cassettes. His voice could be heard congratulating the people for their sacrifices, denouncing the Shah in categorical fashion as a criminal, and underlining the responsibility of the United States for the killings and the repression. (Ironically, US President Carter had visited Tehran on New Year's Eve ۱۹۷۷ and lauded the Shah for creating "an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world."(۱)

As the façade of stability dissolved, the United States continued its military and political support of the Shah uninterrupted by anything but the most superficial hesitation). Most importantly, the Imam recognized that a unique juncture had been reached in Iranian history, that a genuinely revolutionary momentum had come into being which if dissipated would be impossible to rebuild. He therefore warned against any tendency to compromise or to be deceived by the sporadic conciliatory gestures of the Shah.

Thus on the occasion of

۱- New York Times, January ۲, ۱۹۷۸.

Id al-Fitr, when mass demonstrations had passed off with deceptive peacefulness in' Tehran, he issued the following declaration: "Noble people of Iran! Press forward with your movement and do not slacken for a minute, as I know full well you will not! Let no one imagine that after the blessed month of Ramadan his God-given duties have changed. These demonstrations that break down tyranny and advance the goals of Islam are a form of worship that is not confined to certain months or days, for the aim is to save the nation, to enact Islamic justice, and to establish a form of divine (government based on justice."(١)

In one of the numerous miscalculations that marked his attempts to destroy the revolution, the Shah decided to seek the deportation of Imam Khumayni from Iraq, on the assumption, no doubt, that once removed from the prestigious location of Najaf and its proximity to Iran, his voice would somehow be silenced. The agreement of the Iraqi government was obtained at a meeting between the Iraqi and Iranian foreign ministers in New York, and on September ٢۴, ١٩٧٨, the Imam's house in Najaf was surrounded by troops. He was informed that his continued residence in Iraq was .contingent on his abandoning political activity, a condition he was sure to reject

On October ٣, he left Iraq for Kuwait, but was refused entry at the border. After a period of hesitation in which Algeria, Lebanon and Syria were considered as possible destinations, Imam Khumayni embarked for

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, I, p. ٩٧ -١

Paris, on the advice of his second son, Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khumayni, who by now had joined him. Once arrived in Paris, the Imam took up residence in the suburb

of Neauphle-le-Chateau in a house that had been rented for him by Iranian exiles in .France

Residence in a non-Muslim land was no doubt experienced by Imam Khumayni as irksome, and in the declaration he issued from Neauphle-le-Chateau on October ۱۱, ۱۹۷۸, the fortieth day after the massacres of Black Friday, he announced his intention of moving to any Muslim country that assured him freedom of speech.(۱) No such .assurance ever materialized

In addition, his forced removal from Najaf increased popular anger in Iran still further. It was, however, the Shah's regime that turned out to be the ultimate loser from this move. Telephonic communications with Tehran were far easier from Paris than they had been from Najaf, thanks to the Shah's determination to link Iran with the West in every possible way, and the messages and instructions the Imam issued flowed forth uninterrupted from the modest command center he established in a small house opposite his residence. Moreover, a host of journalists from across the world now made their way to France, and the image and the words of the Imam soon became a .daily feature in the world's media

In Iran meanwhile, the Shah was continuously reshaping his government. First he brought in as prime minister Sharif-Imami, an individual supposedly close to ,conservative elements among the 'ulama. Then, on November ۶

.Sahifa-yi Nur, II, p. ۱۴۳ -۱

he formed a military government under General Ghulam-Riza Azhari, a move explicitly recommended by the United States. These political maneuverings had .essentially no effect on the progress of the revolution

On November ٢٣, one week before the beginning of Muharram, the Imam issued a declaration in which he likened the month to "a divine sword in the hands of the soldiers of Islam, our great religious leaders, and respected preachers, and all the followers of Imam Husayn, Sayyid al-shuhada'." They must, he continued, "make maximum use of it; trusting in the power of God, they must tear out the remaining roots of this tree of oppression and treachery." As for the military government, it was (contrary to the Shari'ah and opposition to it a religious duty.(١

Vast demonstrations unfurled across Iran as soon as Muharram began. Thousands of people donned white shrouds as a token of readiness for martyrdom and were cut down as they defied the nightly curfew. On Muharram ٩, a million people marched in Tehran demanding the overthrow of the monarchy, and the following day, 'Ashura, more than two million demonstrators approved by acclamation a seventeen-point declaration of which the most important demand was the formation of an Islamic government headed by the Imam. Killings by the army continued, but military discipline began to crumble, and the revolution acquired an economic dimension with the proclamation of a national strike on December ١٨. With his regime crumbling, the Shah now attempted to co-opt secular, liberal-nationalist politicians in order to

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, III, p. ٢٢۵ -١

.forestall the foundation of an Islamic government

On January ٣, ١٩٧٩, Shahpur Bakhtiyar of the National Front (Jabha-yi Milli) was appointed prime minister to replace General Azhari, and plans were drawn up for the Shah to leave the country for what was advertised as a temporary absence. On January ١٢, the formation of a nine-member regency council was announced; headed by Jalal al-Din Tihrani, an individual proclaimed to have religious credentials, it was to represent the Shah's authority in his absence. None of these maneuvers distracted the Imam from the goal now increasingly within reach. The very next day after the formation of the regency council, he proclaimed from Neauphle-le-Chateau the formation of the Council of the Islamic Revolution (Shaura-yi Inqilab-i Islami), a body entrusted with establishing a transitional government to replace the Bakhtiyar administration. On January ١۶, amid scenes of feverish popular rejoicing, the Shah left .Iran for exile and death

What remained now was to remove Bakhtiyar and prevent a military coup d'état enabling the Shah to return. The first of these aims came closer to realization when Sayyid Jalal al-Din Tihrani came to Paris in order to seek a compromise with Imam Khumayni. He refused to see him until he resigned from the regency council and pronounced it illegal. As for the military, the gap between senior generals, unconditionally loyal to the Shah, and the growing number of officers and recruits sympathetic to the revolution, was constantly growing. When the United States dispatched General Huyser, commander of NATO

land forces in Europe, to investigate the possibility of a military coup, he was obliged .to report that it was pointless even to consider such a step

Conditions now seemed appropriate for Imam Khumayni to return to Iran and preside over the final stages of the revolution. After a series of delays, including the military occupation of Mehrabad airport from January ۲۴ to ۳۰, the Imam embarked on a chartered airliner of Air France on the evening of January ۳۱ and arrived in Tehran the following morning. Amid unparalleled scenes of popular joy - it has been estimated that more than ten million people gathered in Tehran to welcome the Imam back to his homeland – he proceeded to the cemetery of Bihisht-i Zahra to the south of .Tehran where the martyrs of the revolution lay buried

There he decried the Bakhtiyar administration as the "last feeble gasp of the Shah's regime" and declared his intention of appointing a government that would "punch Bakhtiyar's government in the mouth."(۱) The appointment of the provisional Islamic government the Imam had promised came on February ۵. Its leadership was entrusted to Mahdi Bazargan, an individual who had been active for many years in .(various Islamic organizations, most notably the Freedom Movement (Nahzat-i Azadi

The decisive confrontation came less than a week later. Faced with the progressive disintegration of the armed forces and the desertion of many officers and men, together with their weapons, to the Revolutionary Committees that were springing up everywhere, Bakhtiyar decreed a

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, IV, pp. ۲۸۱-۶ -۱

curfew in Tehran to take effect at ۴ p.m. on February ۱۰. Imam Khumayni ordered that the curfew should be defied and warned that if elements in the army loyal to the Shah did not desist from killing the people, he would issue a formal fatwa for jihad.(۱) The following day the Supreme Military Council withdrew its support from Bakhtiyar, and on February ۱۲, ۱۹۷۹, all organs of the regime, political, administrative, and military, .finally collapsed. The revolution had triumphed

Clearly no revolution can be regarded as the work of a single man, nor can its causes be interpreted in purely ideological terms; economic and social developments had helped to prepare the ground for the revolutionary movement of ۱۹۷۸-۷۹. There was also marginal involvement in the revolution, particularly during its final stages when its triumph seemed assured, by secular, liberal-nationalist, and leftist elements. But there can be no doubting the centrality of Imam Khumayni's role and the integrally .Islamic nature of the revolution he led

Physically removed from his countrymen for fourteen years, he had an unfailing sense of the revolutionary potential that had surfaced and was able to mobilize the broad masses of the Iranian people for the attainment of what seemed to many inside the country (including his chosen premier, Bazargan) a distant and excessively ambitious goal. His role pertained, moreover, not merely to moral inspiration and symbolic leadership; he was also the operational leader of the revolution. Occasionally he accepted advice on details of strategy from persons in

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, V, p. ۷۵ -۱

Iran, but he took all key decisions himself, silencing early on all advocates of compromise with the Shah. It was the mosques that were the organizational units of the revolution and mass prayers, demonstrations and martyrdom that were - until the .very last stage - its principal weapons

First Decade of the Islamic Republic, Last Decade of the Imam's Life :۱۹۷۹–۸۹

Imam Khumayni's role was also central in shaping the new political order that emerged from the revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran. At first it appeared that he might exercise his directive role from Qum, for he moved there from Tehran on February ۲۹, causing Qum to become in effect a second capital of Iran. On March ۳۰ and ۳۱, a nationwide referendum resulted in a massive vote in favor of the .establishment of an Islamic Republic

The Imam proclaimed the next day, April ۱, ۱۹۷۹, as the "first day of God's government."(۱) The institutionalization of the new order continued with the election, on August ۳, of an Assembly of Experts (Majlis-i Khubragan), entrusted with the task of reviewing a draft constitution that had been put forward on June ۱۸; fifty-five of the .seventy-three persons elected were religious scholars

It was not however to be expected that a smooth transition from the old regime would prove possible. The powers and duties of the Council of the Islamic Revolutionary, which was intended to serve as an interim legislature, were not clearly .delineated from those of the provisional government headed by Bazargan

More importantly, significant differences of outlook and approach separated the two bodies from each

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, V, p. ۲۳۳ -۱

other. The council, composed predominantly of ulama, favored immediate and radical change and sought to strengthen the revolutionary organs that had come into being – the revolutionary committees, the revolutionary courts charged with punishing members of the former regime charged with serious crimes, and the Corps of Guards of the Islamic Revolution (Sipah-i Pasdaran-i Inqilab-i Islami), established on May ۵, ۱۹۷۹. The government, headed by Bazargan and comprising mainly liberal technocrats of Islamic orientation, sought as swift a normalization of the situation as possible and .the gradual phasing out of the revolutionary institutions

Although Imam Khumayni encouraged members of the two bodies to cooperate and refrained, on most occasions, from arbitrating their differences, his sympathies were clearly with the Council of the Islamic Revolution. On July ۱, Bazargan offered the Imam his resignation. It was refused, and four members of the council l- Rafsanjani, Bahunar, Mahdavi-Kani, and Ayatullah Sayyid 'Ali Khamna'i – joined Bazargan's cabinet in an effort to improve the coordination of the two bodies. In addition to these frictions at the governmental level, a further element of instability was provided by the terrorist activities of shadowy groups that were determined to rob the nascent .Islamic republic of some of its most capable personalities

Thus on May ۱, ۱۹۷۹, Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari, a leading member of the Council of the Islamic Revolution and a former pupil close to the Imam's heart, was .assassinated in Tehran. For once, the Imam wept in an open display of grief

The final break between Bazargan

and the revolution came as a consequence of the occupation of the United States embassy in Tehran on November ۴, ۱۹۷۹ by a coalition of students from the universities of Tehran. Despite declarations of willingness to "honor the will of the Iranian people" and its recognition of the Islamic Republic, the American government .had admitted the Shah to the United States on October ۲۲, ۱۹۷۹

The pretext was his need for medical treatment, but it was widely feared in Iran that his arrival in America, where large numbers of high-ranking officials of the previous regime had gathered, might be the prelude to an American-sponsored attempt to restore him to power, on the lines of the successful CIA coup of August ۱۹۵۳. The Shah's extradition to Iran was therefore demanded by the students occupying the .embassy as a condition for their liberating the hostages they were holding there

It is probable that the students had cleared their action in advance with close associates of Imam Khumayni, for he swiftly extended his protection to them, proclaiming their action "a greater revolution than the first."(۱) Two days later, he predicted that confronted by this "second revolution," America would be "unable to do (a damned thing (Amrika hich ghalati namitavanad bukunad)."(۲

This prediction seemed extravagant to many in Iran, but a military expedition mounted by the United States on April ۲۲, ۱۹۸۰ to rescue the American hostages and possibly, too, to attack sensitive sites in Tehran, came to an abrupt and humiliating end when the American

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, X, p. ۱۴۱ -۱

.Sahifa-yi Nur, X, p. ۱۴۹ -۲

gunship crashed into each other in a sandstorm near Tabas in southeastern Iran. On April ۷, the United States had formally broken diplomatic ties with Iran, a move welcomed by Imam Khumayni as an occasion of rejoicing for the Iranian nation.(۱) It .was not until January ۲۱, ۱۹۸۱ that the American hostages were finally released

Two days after the occupation of the US embassy, Bazargan once again offered his resignation, and this time it was accepted. In addition, the provisional government was dissolved, and the Council of the Islamic Revolution temporarily assumed the task of running the country. This marked the definitive departure of Bazargan and like-minded individuals from the scene; henceforth the term "liberal" became a pejorative designation for those who questioned the fundamental tendencies of the .revolution

In addition, the students occupying the embassy had access to extensive files the Americans had kept on various Iranian personalities who had frequented the embassy over the years; these documents were now published and discredited the personalities involved. Most importantly, the occupation of the embassy constituted a "second revolution" in that Iran now offered a unique example of defiance of the American superpower and became established for American policymakers as their .principal adversary in the Middle East

The enthusiasm aroused by the occupation of the embassy also helped to ensure a large turnout for the referendum that was held on December ۲ and ۳, ۱۹۷۹ to ratify the constitution that had been approved by the Assembly of Experts on November ۱۵. The ,constitution

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, XII, p. ۴۰ -۱

which was overwhelmingly approved, differed greatly from the original draft, above all through its inclusion of the principle of Wilayat al-faqih as its basic and determining :principle. Mentioned briefly in the preamble, it was spelled out in full in Article Five

During the Occultation of the Lord of the Age (Sahib al-Zaman; i.e., the Twelfth" Imam)... the governance and leadership of the nation devolve upon the just and pious faqih who is acquainted with the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability; and recognized and accepted as leader (rahbar) by the majority of the people. In the event that no faqih should be so recognized by the majority, the leader, or leadership council, composed of fuqaha' ".possessing the aforementioned qualifications, will assume these responsibilities

Article ۱۰۹ specified the qualifications and attributes of the leader as "suitability with respect to learning and piety, as required for the functions of mufti and marja'." Article ۱۱۰ listed his powers, which include supreme command of the armed forces, appointment of the head of the judiciary, signing the decree formalizing the election (of the president of the republic, and – under certain conditions - dismissing him.(۱

These articles formed the constitutional basis for Imam Khumayni's leadership role. In addition, from July ۱۹۷۹ onwards, he had been appointing Imam Jum'a's for every major city, who not only delivered the Friday sermon but also acted as his personal representatives. Most government institutions also had a representative of the Imam assigned to them. However, the ultimate

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.Qanun-i Asasi-yi Jumhuri-yi Islami-yi Iran, Tehran, ۱۳۷۰ Sh./۱۹۹۱, pp. ۲۳-۲۴, ۵۳-۵۸ -۱

source of his influence was his vast moral and spiritual prestige, which led to him being designated primarily as Imam, in the sense of one dispensing comprehensive (leadership to the community.(۱

On January ۲۳, ۱۹۸۰, Imam Khumayni was brought from Qum to Tehran to receive treatment for a heart ailment. After thirty-nine days in hospital, he took up residence in the north Tehran suburb of Darband, and on April ۲۲ he moved into a modest house in Jamaran, another suburb to the north of the capital. A closely guarded compound grew up around the house, and it was there that he was destined to spend the rest of .his life

On January ۲۵, during the Imam's hospitalization, Abu'l-Hasan Bani Sadr, a French-educated economist, was elected first president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His success had been made possible in part by the Imam's decision that it was not opportune to have a religious scholar stand for election. This event, followed on March ۱۴ by the first elections to the Majlis, might have counted as a further step to .the institutionalization and stabilization of the political system

However, Bani Sadr's tenure, together with the tensions that soon arose between him and a majority of the deputies in the Majlis, occasioned a severe crisis that led ultimately to Bani Sadr's dismissal. For the president, his inherent megalomania aggravated by his victory at the polls, was reluctant to concede supremacy to Imam Khumayni, and he therefore attempted to build up a personal following, consisting

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Suggestions that the use of this title assimilated him to the Twelve Imams of Shi'i -۱ .belief and hence attributed infallibility to him are groundless

.largely of former leftists who owed their positions exclusively to him

In this enterprise, he inevitably clashed with the newly formed Islamic Republic Party (Hizb-i Jumhuri-yi Islami), headed by Ayatullah Bihishti, which dominated the Majlis and was loyal to what was referred to as "the line of the Imam" (khatt-i Imam). As he had earlier done with the disputes between the provisional government and the Council of the Islamic Revolution, the Imam sought to reconcile the parties, and on September ۱۱ ۱۹۸۰ appealed to all branches of government and their members to set aside their differences.

While this new governmental crisis was brewing, on September ۲۲, ۱۹۸۰, Iraq sent its forces across the Iranian border and launched a war of aggression that was to last for almost eight years. Iraq enjoyed financial support in this venture from the Arab states lining the Persian Gulf, above all from Saudi Arabia. Imam Khumayni, however, correctly regarded the United States as the principal instigator of the war from the outset, and American involvement became increasingly visible as the war wore on.

Although Iraq advanced territorial claims against Iran, the barely disguised purpose of the aggression was to take advantage of the dislocations caused in Iran by the revolution, particularly the weakening of the army through purges of disloyal officers, and to destroy the Islamic Republic. As he had done during the revolution, Imam Khumayni insisted on an uncompromising stance and inspired a steadfast resistance, which prevented the easy Iraqi victory many foreign observers had

confidently foretold. Initially, however, Iraq enjoyed some success, capturing the port .city of Khurramshahr and encircling Abadan

The conduct of the war became one more issue at dispute between Bani Sadr and his opponents. Continuing his efforts at reconciling the factions, Imam Khumayni established a three-man commission to investigate the complaints each had against the other. The commission reported on June ۱, ۱۹۸۱ that Bani Sadr was guilty of violating the constitution and contravening the Imam's instructions. He was accordingly declared incompetent by the Majlis to function as president, and the next day, in accordance with Article ۱۱۰ section (e) of the constitution, Imam Khumayni .dismissed him. He went into hiding, and on July ۲۸ fled to Paris, disguised as a woman

Toward the end of his presidency, Bani Sadr had allied himself with the Sazman-i Mujahidin-i Khalq (Organization of People's Strugglers; however, the group is commonly known in Iran as munafiqin, "hypocrites," not mujahidin, because of its members' hostility to the Islamic Republic). An organization with a tortuous ideological and political history, it had hoped, like Bani Sadr, to displace Imam Khumayni and capture power for itself. After Bani Sadr went into exile, members of the organization embarked on a campaign of assassinating government leaders in the hope that the .Islamic Republic would collapse

Even before Bani Sadr fled, a massive explosion had destroyed the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party, killing more than seventy people including Ayatullah ,Bihishti. On August ۳۰, ۱۹۸۱, Muhammad 'Ali Raja'i, Bani Sadr's successor as president

was killed in another explosion. Other assassinations followed over the next two .years, including five Imam Jum'a's as well as a host of lesser figures

Throughout these disasters, Imam Khumayni maintained his customary composure, declaring, for example, after the assassination of Raja'i that the killings would change nothing and in fact showed Iran to be "the most stable country in the world," given the ability of the government to continue functioning in an orderly manner.(۱) The fact that Iran was able to withstand such blows internally while continuing the war of defense against Iraq was indeed testimony to the roots the new order had struck and .to the undiminished prestige of Imam Khumayni as the leader of the nation

Ayatullah Khamna'i, a longtime associate and devotee of the Imam, was elected president on October ۲, ۱۹۸۱, and he remained in this position until he succeeded him as leader of the Islamic Republic on his death in ۱۹۸۹. No governmental crises comparable to those of the first years of the Islamic Republic occurred during his tenure. Nonetheless, structural problems persisted. The constitution provided that legislation passed by the Majlis should be reviewed by a body of senior fuqaha' known as the Council of Guardians (Shaura-yi Nagahban) to ensure its conformity with the .provisions of Ja'fari fiqh

This frequently led to a stalemate on a variety of important legislative issues. On at least two occasions, in October ۱۹۸۱ and January ۱۹۸۳, Hashimi- Rafsanjani, then chairman of the Majlis, requested the Imam to arbitrate

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, XV, p. ۱۳۰ -۱

decisively, drawing on the prerogatives inherent in the doctrine of Wilayat al-faqih, in order to break the deadlock. He was reluctant to do so, always preferring that a .consensus should emerge

However, on January ۶, ۱۹۸۸, in a letter addressed to Khamna'i, the Imam put forward a far-reaching definition of Wilayat al-faqih, now termed "absolute" (mutlaqa), which made it theoretically possible for the leadership to override all conceivable objections to the policies it supported. Governance, Imam Khumayni proclaimed, is the most important of all divine ordinances (ahkam-i ilahi) and it takes precedence over .(secondary divine ordinances (ahkam-i far'iya-yi ilahiya

Not only does the Islamic state permissibly enforce a large number of laws not mentioned specifically in the sources of the shari'a, such as the prohibition of narcotics and the levying of customs dues; it can also suspend the performance of a fundamental religious duty, the hajj, when this is necessitated by the higher interest (of the Muslims.(۱

At first sight, the theory of wilayat -i mutlaqa-yi faqih might appear to be a justification for unlimited individual rule by the leader (rahbar). One month later, however, Imam Khumayni delegated these broadly defined prerogatives to a commission named the Assembly for the Determination of the Interest of the Islamic Order (Majma'-i Tashkhis-i Maslahat-i Nizam-i Islami.) This standing body has the power to settle decisively all differences on legislation between the Majlis and the .Council of Guardians

The war against Iraq continued to preoccupy Iran until July ۱۹۸۸. Iran had come to define its

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, XX, pp. ۱۷۰-۷۱ -۱

war aims as not simply the liberation of all parts of its territory occupied by Iraq, but also the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Husayn. A number of military victories made this goal appear attainable. On November ۲۹, ۱۹۸۱, Imam Khumayni congratulated his military commanders on successes achieved in Khuzestan, remarking that the Iraqis had been obliged to retreat before the faith of the Iranian troops and their eagerness for martyrdom.(۱)

The following year, on May ۲۴, Khurramshahr, which had been held by the Iraqis since shortly after the outbreak of war, was liberated, and only small pockets of Iranian territory remained in Iraqi hands. The Imam marked the occasion by condemning anew the Persian Gulf states that supported Saddam Husayn and describing the victory as a divine gift.(۲) Iran failed, however, to follow up swiftly on its surprise victory and the momentum, which might have made possible the destruction of Saddam Husayn's regime, was lost as the tide of war flowed back and forth. The United States was, in any event, determined to deny Iran a decisive victory and stepped up its intervention in the conflict in a variety of ways.

Finally, on July ۲, ۱۹۸۸, the US navy stationed in the Persian Gulf shot down a civilian Iranian airliner, with the loss of ۲۹۰ passengers. With the utmost reluctance, Imam Khumayni agreed to end the war on the terms specified in Resolution ۵۹۸ of the United Nations Security Council, comparing his decision in a lengthy statement issued

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۱- Sahifa-yi Nur, XV, p. ۲۳۴.

۲- Sahifa-yi Nur, XVI, pp. ۱۵۴-۵.

(on July ۲۰ to the drinking of poison.(۱

Any notion that the acceptance of a ceasefire with Iraq signaled a diminution in the Imam's readiness to confront the enemies of Islam was dispelled when, on February ۱۴, ۱۹۸۹, he issued a fatwa calling for the execution of Selman Rushdie, author of the obscene and blasphemous novel, The Satanic Verses, as well as those responsible for .the publication and dissemination of the work

The fatwa received a great deal of support in the Muslim world as the most authoritative articulation of popular outrage at Rushdie's gross insult to Islam. Although its demand remained unfulfilled, it demonstrated plainly the consequences that would have to be faced by any aspiring imitator of Rushdie, and thus had an important deterrent effect. Generally overlooked at the time was the firm grounding of the Imam's fatwa in the existing provisions of both Shi'i and Sunni jurisprudence; it was not therefore innovative. What lent the fatwa particular significance was rather .its issuance by the Imam as a figure of great moral authority

The Imam had also gained the attention of the outside world, albeit in a less spectacular way, on January ۴, ۱۹۸۹, when he sent Mikhail Gorbachev, then general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a letter in which he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of communism: "Henceforth it will be necessary to look for communism in the museums of political history of the world." He also warned Gorbachev and

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.Sahifa-yi Nur, XXI, pp. ۲۲۷-۴۴ -۱

the Russian people against replacing communism with Western-style materialism: “The basic problem of your country has nothing to do with ownership, the economy, or freedom; it is the lack of a true belief in God, the same problem that has drawn the West into a blind alley of triviality and purposelessness.”(۱)

Internally, however, the most important development in the last year of Imam Khumayni’s life was, without doubt, his dismissal of Ayatullah Muntaziri from the position of successor to the leadership of the Islamic Republic. Once a student and close associate of the Imam, who had gone so far as to call him “the fruit of my life,” Muntaziri had had among his associates over the years persons executed for counterrevolutionary activity, including a son-in-law, Mahdi Hashimi, and made far-reaching criticisms of the Islamic Republic, particularly with regard to judicial matters.

On July ۳۱, ۱۹۸۸, he wrote a letter to the Imam questioning what he regarded as unjustified executions of members of the Sazman-i Mujahidin-I Khalq held in Iranian prisons after the organization, from its base in Iraq, had made a large-scale incursion into Iranian territory in the closing stages of the Iran-Iraq war. Matters came to a head the following year, and on March ۲۸, ۱۹۸۹, the Imam wrote to Muntaziri accepting his resignation from the succession, a resignation that under the circumstances he was compelled to offer.(۲)

On June ۳, ۱۹۸۹, after eleven days in hospital for an operation to stop internal bleeding, Imam Khumayni lapsed into a critical condition

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۱- Ava-yi Tauhid, Tehran, ۱۳۶۷ Sh./۱۹۸۹, pp. ۳-۵.

۲- Sahifa-yi Nur, XXI, p. ۱۱۲.

and died. The outpouring of grief was massive and spontaneous, the exact counterpoint to the vast demonstrations of joy that had greeted his return to Iran a little over ten years earlier. Such was the press of mourners, estimated at some nine million that the body ultimately had to be transported by helicopter to its place of burial to the south of Tehran on the road leading to Qum. A still expanding complex of structures has grown up around the shrine of the Imam, making it likely that it will .become the center of an entire new city devoted to ziyara and religious learning

The testament of Imam Khumayni was published soon after his death. A lengthy document, it addresses itself principally to the various classes of Iranian society, urging them to do whatever is necessary for the preservation and strengthening of the Islamic Republic. Significantly, however, it begins with an extended meditation on the hadith-i thaqalayn: “I leave among you two great and precious things: the Book of God and my progeny; they will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the pool.” The Imam interprets the misfortunes that have befallen Muslims throughout history and more particularly in the present age as the result of efforts .(precisely to disengage the Qur’an from the progeny of the Prophet (S

The legacy of Imam Khumayni was considerable. He had bequeathed to Iran not only a political system enshrining the principles both of religious leadership and of an elected legislature

and head of the executive branch, but also a whole new ethos and self-image, a dignified stance of independence vis-à-vis the West are in the Muslim world. He was deeply imbued with the traditions and worldview of Shi'i Islam, but he viewed the revolution he had led and the republic he had founded as the nucleus for a worldwide .awakening of all Muslims

He had sought to attain this goal by, among other things, issuing proclamations to the hujjaj on a number of occasions, and alerting them to the dangers arising from American dominance of the Middle East, the tireless activity of Israel for subverting the Muslim world, and the subservience to America and Israel of numerous Middle Eastern governments. Unity between Shi'is and Sunnis was one of his lasting concerns; he was, indeed, the first Shi'i authority to declare unconditionally valid (prayers performed by Shi'is behind a Sunni imam.(١)

It must finally be stressed that despite the amplitude of his political achievements, Imam Khumayni's personality was essentially that of a gnostic for whom political activity was but the natural outgrowth of an intense inner life of devotion. The comprehensive vision of Islam that he both articulated and exemplified is, indeed, his most significant legacy

Introduction

point

الحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَلَعْنَهُ اللهِ عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِمْ إِلى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

Lord! Grant brightness of sincerity to the mirror of the heart, Cleanse the rust of hypocrisy from the tablet of the heart, and show the path of virtue and salvation to

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.Istifta'at, I, p. ۲۷۹ -١

the helpless wanderers in the mazes of the bewilderment and error and confusion. Endow us with the nobleness and generosity of character. Reveal to us your glory and .splendor that you have reserved only for your chosen servants

Expel the legions of Satan and ignorance from the realms of our heart; implant the divine hosts of knowledge and wisdom in their stead. Enrich our hearts with the profusion of your love and that of your Chosen in this transitory world, this ephemeral lodging place. And shower Your choicest blessing upon us at the time of death and .thereafter. Extend to us your mercy, and grant us proximity to the Highest Good

Purpose of Writing the Book

I, a humble servant of God, was contemplating for some time, to select forty hadith from among the ahadith of the members of the Household of the Prophet (S) from the authentic books of the sahabah, and scholars, and was trying to compile them with an appropriate explanation of each of them that can be applied to the general conditions of the people. I chose to write them in Persian, so that the Persian knowing people may also be benefited from them. God willing, this compilation would be an attempt to :serve the command of the Prophet (S) who said

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي أَرْبَعِينَ حَدِيثاً يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهَا بَعَثَهُ اللهُ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ فَقِيهاً عَالِماً.

From among my followers, one who shall preserve and protect my forty ahadith, so that my people may be benefited from them, God Almighty will treat

him on the Day of Resurrection with great men of wisdom and learning .((jurisprudence

First Hadith: Jihad of The Self

point

عَنِ الشَّيْخِ ثِقَهِ الإِسْلام مُحَمَّدٍ بن يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى، صَاحِبِ الكَافِى، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّوْفَلِى عَنِ السُّكُونِيِّ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، بَعَثَ سَرِيَّهُ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ: «مَرْحَباً بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوُا الجِهَادَ الأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِىَ عَلَيْهِمُ الجِهَادُ الأَكْبَرُ.» فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، مَا الجِهَادُ الأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: «جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ.»

Verbal Translation

Al-Sukuni relates on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (A): Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefront, the Prophet (S) of God said, “Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad, and have yet to perform the major one.” When asked, what is the major jihad? the Prophet replied, “the jihad of the self” (struggle .(against self

Exposition

السَّرِيَّهُ قِطْعَهٌ مِنَ الجَيْشِ. يُقَالُ: خَيْرُ السَّرَايَا أَرْبَعُمِائَهِ رَجُلٍ.

Sariyyah is the section (contingent) of a big army, and it has been said that four hundred is an optimum number for the best sariyyah. According to the wordings of the tradition this can be inferred that man is a marvel possessing two lives and two worlds within one existence. That is, apparent life or the outward world, which is this worldly existence, and is associated with his body, and the other is ‘inner life’, the inward world, associated with the hidden, invisible, higher other world, his soul in short, which belongs to the realms of invisible and celestial world, and consists of .several levels and grades

These levels are generally divided sometimes

into seven sections and sometimes into four. They are sometimes divided into three, and sometimes into just two sections. For each one of them is specified host of guardians. The host related with the divine and intellectual powers attracts him towards the sublime, heavenly spheres, and summons him to the acts of virtue and goodness. The other host of guardians is the ignoble and satanic, which attracts man towards the baser realms of darkness and shame, and invites him to the acts of .villainy and destruction

There is always a state of conflict and strive between these two forces, and human existence serves as the battleground of these two bands. When the divine forces of good become successful, man emerges as a virtuous and blessed being, and attains the high station of angels, and is congregated under the category of prophets, saints .and the pious

When the satanic forces of darkness dominate, man becomes a rebellious and vicious being, and is flocked with the fiendish group of the infidels and cursed. Since this is not an occasion to discuss it here, I shall take up this issue of the crusade of the self whenever the self and causes of its deterioration and perfection would be discussed .in the latter passages

First Grade

This grade itself consists of different stages (fusul). You have to know that the lowest of them is the worldly and outward human existence comprising the initial stages of the self and its apparent manifestations. The divine spark is blended with

the physical to form man's earthly existence. It is here in this body that the armies of good and evil are stationed, and the visible potentialities of body function as warring forces. It has seven quarters. They are ears, eyes, tongue, stomach, private parts, and arms and legs. All these diffused faculties under the control of the self are employed by the self in seven spheres of life. The seat of imagination also is an important faculty, as the thought and imagination are sovereign over all visible and .invisible human faculties

If the faculty of thought resolves to employ all other faculties to move in the fiendish directions, all of them are converted into satanic forces and the whole territory (of existence) is turned into a satanic domain, and the forces of piety, rationality and good are weakened and subjugated by them. As a result they wind up their business and leave off the scene, vacating the empire for the possession of Satan. If the faith and reason take possession of the mind, and they command all human faculties to work in their own direction, man acts according to the dictates of reason and faith (shar'), thus making the empire (of his existence) a domain of divine and rational .powers, and compel satanic forces to retreat with all its weaponry accepting defeat

Thus the jihad of the self is the jihad of greater importance. This jihad is superior to being killed in the way of God, since this condition implies overpowering

one's own powers and faculties, and placing them under the yoke of God's command, .and purging the domain of our body of satanic elements and their forces

Contemplation

The first and foremost condition for one's strife with his own self, and hence his movement towards God essentially means introspection and self-reflection. Some of the moral philosophers have given it the fifth position in priorities, which is also correct. Here introspection is used in the sense of devoting some time, however insignificant it is, contemplating about our duties towards our Master and Creator, Who has brought us into this world, and Who has bestowed upon us all the means of pleasure and joys of life, Who has equipped us with a sound body and faultless faculties and senses, each of whom serves a specific purpose of its own, and whose functioning bewilders human intellect. In addition to all these endowments and graces, He has sent so many prophets and His Holy Book for our guidance and invited .us to receive His blessings

Whether all these things have been granted to us by the Master and Emperor of all kings merely to serve this animal existence and to satisfy our appetites and instincts, which we share with other animals, or whether there is some higher aim? Whether all the prophets of God, great sages, thinkers and scholars of every nation have invited the people to follow certain rational principles and Divine legislation, and asked the people to abstain from all animal tendencies and detach themselves

from this mortal and perishable habitation were their enemies, or they had conceived an entirely different idea of salvation, which we ordinary human creatures, blindly ?obeying the dictates of lust, could not conceive

If we reflect in a rational manner for a moment, we shall realize that the aim of imparting to us all these graces and endowments is something else, superior to and higher than what is visible. This world is a stage of action and its aim is a higher and more sublime sphere of existence. This lower and animal existence is not an end in itself. A rational man should think of his own self introspectively and should feel pity for his state of helplessness. With a sense of pity he should address his own self, saying, "O callous self! Thou has wasted precious years of thy short life in pursuance of hedonistic and sensuous propensities! And nothing is gained except regret and .sense of loss

Thou should be regretful before God for thy past deeds, and commence a new journey in the direction of His prescribed goal, the journey that leads to the life of eternity and perpetual bliss. Thou should not bargain short-lived transitory joys, !which are hard to obtain for eternal bliss and felicity. Think for a while, O Callous self

Thou should think over the conditions of the people from the dawn of civilization up to the present time that is witnessed by thee. See and balance their hardships and torments with the comforts

and pleasures they could attain, and thou shall see their pains and sufferings always overwhelmed and cancelled their joys and pleasures. Joys and pleasures are not for everyone in this life. One who invites and induces thee to pursue the worldly joys and material gains, is evidently one of the satanic hosts in the human form, who undoubtedly is an emissary of the Satan. 'He always induces other men to join him in .his indulgence in sensualities, and declares his conviction in material life herewith

At this juncture, O self, thou should pause for a moment, and think whether he is satisfied with his own condition, or whether all this points to one who himself is inflicted, and wants to taint others' poor life with the same vice. O self, thou should entreatingly ask God's approval of thine acts, and seek His pleasure. Pray to Him that thine acts be approved by Him. Between Him and thee there is always a spark of hope. This hope is realized in thy thinking with firm resolution to fight against the Satan and thine own baser self. This strife with the self leads thee to a higher stage, ".and try thy best to attain that through sincere struggle

Will And Resolution

The next stage, after the stage of contemplation and ponderance through which an individual striving to progress on the spiritual path has to pass, is the stage of resolution. (This is a different thing from volition, which al-Shaykh al-Ra'is Ibn Sina, in 'al-'Isharat' alludes to as

the initial stage of ‘irfan). Some of our revered scholars (may God grant them longevity) also state that resolution is the essence of humanity and criterion of human .freedom

The differences in human gradation are actually indicative of the discrepancy of the stages of human resolution. The resolution which is required for this particular stage is synonymous with laying the foundation of a good life, a resolution to purge life from sin, and to perform all obligatory (wajib) acts, and a resolution to compensate for the days lost (in sinfulness), and finally resolve to behave as a rational and religious .person ought to

That is, he should adopt a behavior that is in accordance with the codes of religious law, which would acknowledge him as a real human being, a rational man. His gait and manner should be an imitation and copy of the Prophet’s life. He must, in appearance, follow the Prophet (S) as a model in his manner and actions, in his abstinences and his choices. This is quite possible, since it is in the powers of ordinary servants of God .seemingly to act in the way of that great leader of human beings

You should know that no path for the realization of divine existence can be undertaken unless one familiarizes himself with the apparent or overt form of Shari’ah. Unless a person fully acquaints himself with the knowledge of the Shari’ah laws and follows them faithfully, the higher values of morality cannot be attained by him. Without

adhering to the apparent teachings of Islam it is not possible that the light of the Divine Knowledge could descend upon his heart, and the wisdom of the invisible, and .the mysteries of the holy law be revealed to him

After attaining this stage, the truth unveiled for him and enlightenment bestowed upon his heart, a person would act with greater observance of the manifest forms of religion. This falsifies the claims of pseudo spiritualists, who say that the inner perfection can only be acquired by relinquishing outer accomplishments, or, that after acquiring inner excellences, necessity of observing outward forms does not remain obligatory. This is a mistaken conception born of ignorance about the stages of worship and the different grades of human progress. We shall deal with this subject in .the latter chapters, may God grant it so

(Effort And Struggle (Spiritual

Dear friend: try to be a man of strong will power and resolution, so that you may not go from this world as a person without resolution, and hence rise on the day of resurrection as a brainless-being, not in the form of human being. For the otherworld is the place where what is hidden is unveiled and secrets are exposed. One's audacity to commit sin, converts him little by little into a man devoid of will power, and takes away the noble essence of humanity from him. Our respected teacher used to say that more than anything else, giving the ears to the sounds of music and songs, steal from men

.their will power and the power of resolution

Hence, my brother, desist from transgression, resolve to return to God, and acquire a mien similar to that of true human being. Join the community of the men of religion and in seclusion pray to God, so that He may assist you in your mission, and pray that the Prophet (S) and the members of his Household (A) intercede for you. May God bestow His graces and favors upon you. May He escort you in the coming dangers, since the path of life is full of great risks and hazards. On the way of life there are very deep crevices and it is possible that one may stumble and fall in them in such a manner that none of his efforts could save him from the coming catastrophe. It is also .probable that in some cases the interceding of an intercessor cannot save him either

(Self–Examination And Stipulation (Musharatah

Self-conditioning, contemplation and self-examination are essential pre-requisites for a seeker (mujahid) of truth who is battling with his self. Self-conditioning or stipulation means binding oneself with the resolve not to do anything against God's commands. This is called musharatah, such as 'I will not violate the Law of God today.' It is very easy to stick to such condition for one day. Try to resolve, abide by your own resolve, and experiment, and you will see that how easy this task is. Satan, the cursed creature, and his legions may magnify the volume of the task in your

eyes, but these are the guiles played by the cheat. Curse, and drive the Devil and evil thoughts from within the depths of the heart and the domain of your mind. .Experiment for one day and you will verify how easy this task is

(Guarding Against Evil (Muraqabah

After stipulating about his acts, man should enter this stage. It is essential that throughout the period of stipulation the mujahid struggling against his own self should constantly concentrate upon his actions. If any time any idea of violating Divine commands occurs to him, he should know that this idea has been instilled into his .mind by the Satan and his allies, who want to deter him from his good resolutions

He ought to curse them, and seek God's compassionate protection, and banish those villainous ideas from the realm of his heart, and tell the Satan that this day also he has to abide by the condition imposed upon his own self that he would not go against God's commands, as He is the One Who has provided him with all the excellences and bounties. It is He, Who has given him the riches of health, security, and peace year after year in this world. In recognition of all God's graces it is not sufficient even if he .serves Him till eternity, let alone a trivial thing like this

I hope, that Satan will be driven away, and the Divine forces will prevail. I assure you that this practice of self-criticism and self-examination would not hinder your

day-to-day activity. I advise you to remain in the same state of mind till night-the time for introspection and inner deliberation-and evaluate your deeds of the whole day. This is the time to see whether you have been honest to the Giver of all, to whom everybody is accountable. If you have been faithful to Him, you should be thankful to Him, that He has made you successful in your intentions. And realize that you have gone a step forward in His direction and became an object of His attention. God willing, God will help you in performing all worldly and religious duties, and will diminish your pains for the next day. If you repeat this many times, it is imminent that you will be accustomed to the acts of piety. You will see then that all this does not .require you to make hard efforts

You will also notice that obedience to God gives ample pleasure. Though this world is not where one is immediately rewarded, yet faithfulness to God and abstaining from sins is fruitful in this world also. God never entrusts His creatures with cumbersome and heavy tasks, which are beyond their powers, but it is the Satan and his allies who magnify them in your view. God forbid, if there are any lapses on your part, ask God's forgiveness, and beseechingly implore Him that you will be more careful in future, so that the Almighty may throw open the doors of His grace and compassion to

.you, and may guide you in the straight path

(Remembrance (Tadhakkur

The factors, that fully assist man in his jihad with his self and the Satan, and to which a treader mujahid has to pay greater attention is constant remembrance of God. Though there are many other important stages, I will be content to discuss this stage .here

Remembrance Of God, Remembering The Graces Bestowed By Him

You know that thankfulness is natural and man's nature commands man to be grateful to his benefactor. If one tries to read the book of his own heart, he will see that this law is written there. The sense of veneration and gratitude for the benefactors increases with the amount of benefaction, particularly if the benefactor's generosity has no selfish motive. Greater the selfless generosity, greater is sense of gratitude. For example, compare the extent of veneration for one who presents you a horse with a selfish motive, with the respect you have for a person, who grants you a village of several hectares, without any inkling of selfish motives. If a doctor rescues you from the darkness of blindness, you naturally owe to him a lot of respect, and if .someone saves you from the clutches of death, you owe him a lot more

You yourselves reflect and estimate the seen and unseen favors bestowed on us by the Almighty, even a small fraction of which all men and the jinn cannot even provide us with. Take for instance the air we breathe day and night, upon which our existence as well as that of

other living beings is dependent, nothing can remain alive even if it is taken off merely for a quarter of an hour. What a marvelous gift it is! If all men and the jinn of the world labor hard to contrive such a thing, they cannot do that. In the same way, try to recall other gifts of God also, like external bodily senses viz. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, etc., and inner faculties like thinking, imagination and reason, etc., each one of which carries unlimited benefits and which are granted to us by Our Lord. Besides .these valuable gifts, there are several other gifts also

Moreover, He has sent His messengers and prophets and His Books as well to show us which path is right and which one is wrong, which path leads us to Heaven or Hell. He fulfills all our needs in this world and the Hereafter, without having any need of our adoration. Observance of His commands, or transgressing them does not make any difference to Him, it is for the sake of our own benefit that He has enjoined good and forbidden indecencies. While remembering all these and various other favors, whose reckoning is beyond the powers of human beings, do we not see that respecting and obeying such a Benefactor is essential for us, or does our reason approve of the acts ?of violating His commands

This is an evident fact that we respect great people and those older in age. This is also

true that people respect the wealthy and powerful persons, and rulers and kings, since they are recognized as great. Can their greatness be matched with the grandeur and magnificence of that King of kings, in Whose kingdom this world of us is merely a particle of dust. He is the Creator and King of this vast cosmos, whose .infiniteness cannot be measured or even conceived by human intellect

Human being, a creature crawling on one of the smallest planets miserably fails to grasp the extent of his own small world, whose sun cannot be compared with far greater suns of innumerable galaxies. Our solar system is nothing as compared to lesser several other solar systems, which still elude the keen eyes (and refined telescopes) of great explorers and investigators of the world. Is that Greatest of the great, who can know and cover not only minute details of these known worlds, but of many more unknown worlds, in a twinkling of an eye, is not venerable according to ?the dictates of reason, as well as in the light of the great book of nature

If any one fails to do this, he ought to be extra watchful and careful, since God Almighty is present everywhere, and no odd corner of the world can delude his Omnipresent sight. Every living being is within the range of His view and all knowledge is in His infinite attendance, so never forget Him. A speck of penitence in one's heart would not melt any

person into water, and he would not fall to the ground. Therefore, my dear friend, .remember God and remember all His favors and graces, and stop disobeying Him

Overpower and subdue the satanic band in this great war, and convert the spheres of your mind into divine realm by driving out the satanic legions and inviting the divine hosts, so that God may succor and protect you in the dangers threatening to befall you in this battle. The battlefield, which is more immense than this one, is the scene of the battle (jihad) against thine own self, the invisible world of within and the second stage of this jihad. We shall deal with this subject afterwards. By the time, I remind you not to have any expectations from anyone but God. Except Him, the Almighty, nobody can help you. With all humility and with all the tears your eyes can offer (to wash your sins), pray to God and seek His assistance to emerge victorious in this crucial battle. wa innahu wali al-tawfiq

The Second Stage

:The second stage also consists of several steps

The human soul inhabits another realm and another territory also, which is the world of the hidden and the sphere of the sublime world. In that world, the role of the sensual forces assumes graver dimensions. This is the place, where the struggle and conflict between the divine forces and the fiendish ones is more severe and also more significant. Everything that exists in the external or visible world drifts to

this hidden world, and is manifested there. Whichever of the forces whether godly or .devilish, is victorious here is essentially triumphant there also

So, the jihad al-nafs or the internal struggle is of great significance for all great religious thinkers, mystics, and moralists. It can be rather considered as the origin and the source of all felicities or woes, and of promotion and sublimation or debasement and degradation of self. One should be extremely self-conscious while undertaking this jihad. Because, it is possible that, God forbid, due to the defeat of heavenly forces, the self is left vacant for the unholy occupation of the vicious and unworthy satanic legions, and hence causing an eternal loss to the human being that cannot be .retrieved

Even the intercession of an intercessor cannot save him from becoming an object of the wrath and indignation of the Most Merciful of the merciful. It is also possible that man's intercessor may become his adversary. It is a pity that such a thing should happen to anyone that one who pleads for him should become his opponent. God alone knows that what misfortunes, what perils and what hardships are to follow Divine wrath and antagonism of God's friends, compared to which all the infernal fires, plagues, evils, serpents and scorpions are insignificant and mild. God forbid, whatever sufferings of hell have been described by saints, ascetics, and mystics, compared to them all the imaginable pains and sufferings of this world are very mild. All of the

torments about which we have heard, are trifle and insignificant when compared to the miseries one has to undergo in the Hereafter. Heaven and hell whose account has been given in the Book and in the traditions of prophets of God are certainly the heaven and hell of wicked actions, and are prepared for rewarding or punishing good .and bad human deeds

There is a subtle allusion also to the heaven and hell of morality, which is more significant than even the Bihisht al-liqa, the heaven of beatific vision, and the Jahannam al-firaq, the hell of separation from Him. This is considered to be of great significance but is hidden from our eyes and is opened to them alone who deserve it. You and me who do not deserve it should not doubt it. We should have faith in it, since God and His friends have told us that this non-detailed (ijmali) faith also is beneficial for us. Sometimes, it is also possible that unbelief arising out of ignorance, and unreasonable rejection, without any knowledge and understanding of the truth may bring great harm to us, the extent of which is unthinkable. In this world we cannot .understand those harms

If you hear something, which has been, reported from any thinker, mystic or ascetic, do not refute it or consider it invalid just because it is not in accordance with your taste, or does not fit in your mode of thinking. This idea may have its origin in a higher

source, inaccessible to you like the Qur'an, hadith, or reason. How strange it will be that a faqih issues a fatwa (a religious or legal opinion) regarding a certain ayah (a pecuniary compensation for any offence against a person) of which you are ignorant, and you reject it without checking the relevant evidences. Or, when a holy person or a mystic speaks something concerning religious learning, or he refers to the conditions of heaven or hell, it is easy for you to refute him or even dare to insult him. For it does .not need much thinking or knowledge

But do not forget that it is possible that the person, who is an authority on that subject and a master in that field, might have traced it back to the Holy Book, or has access to some traditions transmitted from infallible Imams (AS), and you may not have come across it. In that case, you would be guilty of rejecting God and His Prophet (S) without any plausible excuse. You have no justification to say later that your judgment was not correct, your knowledge was limited, or that you had heard a certain person speaking otherwise on the minbar (pulpit); such excuses are unfounded, and in any .case let not your objective be blurred

Whatever has been related about the paradise of good morals and deeds and about the inferno of bad morals and deeds refers to the states, which we cannot experience ,here. Thus, my friend ! take great care

search for remedy, and try to discover the ways and means of deliverance for yourself. Seek refuge in God, the Most Merciful, and Beneficent, and beseech His mercy with humble supplications and lamentation, so that He may help you in this holy war against your carnal self and you may be victorious and the domain of your heart .may be liberated from evil influences

The fiendish legions may be turned out of the place so that it may be given in the possession of its rightful Owner, and the felicities, honors and joys may be granted to you by God. All the praises that you have heard of the Heaven, its hours and its mansions, are nothing compared to Divine Bliss, nothing can be estimated higher. That domain is absolutely a divine sphere, which has been described by the friends of God from this rightly guided luminous ummah (millat al-bayda). This is a world of .pleasures, which no ear has ever heard of, and no human heart has ever experienced

(Hidden Or Inner Powers (Quwwa al-Batini

You should know that with His Wisdom and Authority, God Almighty has created certain powers and faculties in the invisible world of the inner self. They are of enormous benefits for us. Here we shall mention three of them: they are, al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah-the power of invention or imagination, al-quwwah al-ghadabiyyah-the power of passion or anger, and al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah-the power of lust or .sensuality

Each of these powers is of great benefit to the mankind, like the preservation of the human individual

and species, advancement of human interests in this world as well as in the Hereafter, of which religious scholars have given elaborate accounts and I need not repeat them. What is essential to state here is that these three powers are the source and origin of all virtuous and vicious deeds, and the source of all invisible and sublime .forms

Briefly speaking, as man possesses a physical and a terrestrial form in this world, which is devised and contrived by the Almighty in such a wonderful manner that all great philosophers and scientists are puzzled, and the science of anatomy is not fully equipped to discover and understand its functioning rightly even to this day. God has made man superior to other living beings by endowing him a superb constitution and a beautiful appearance. Yet there is another form and a different face of him, which is heavenly and invisible, which is determined by the qualities of his soul and his inner .nature

In the Hereafter, whether it is in the Barzakh (an interval of time between the death of man and his resurrection) or whether on the Last Day, if one's inner nature, his deeds, and his inner self are really human, his heavenly visage also will be man-like. But if his deeds are inhuman, he will not possess human form; it will be rather subject to the state of his inner self and his psyche. For instance, if his inner self is dominated by the power of lust

or sensuality (al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah) and animality and brutality overwhelm and govern his inner self, his otherworldly visage will be of a brute and the reign of his inner world would be under the control of one of the beasts, corresponding to that .quality of his soul

If the power of passion or anger conquers one's inner self and his psyche, his otherworldly appearance will resemble one of the bestial forms, corresponding to that attribute of his nature. And if the power of imagination and invention is governed by fiendish forces and his inner self is made vicious, governed by the vices like deceit, dishonesty, slandering, backbiting, which are the attributes of Satan, he may undergo a metamorphosis and assume one of the forms of Satan. Sometimes it is also possible that he would have an appearance that symbolizes two or several vices. In that case, a form which does not resemble any of the brutes, but an unusual and queer form, with which cannot be compared the most terrible and ugliest monster in the world, will .be acquired by him

It has been recorded from the Prophet (S) of God that some persons will be raised on the Last Day in such a mien that even monkeys and dog flies will appear better looking than that. It is also possible that several forms may be prescribed for one individual in that world. Because that world is not like this world, where one individual cannot acquire more than one form. This account

itself is logical as well as self-evident. Because, the criterion of those different forms (of which human form is one) would be the state of soul at the time of death the state in which the soul departs from the body. It is in this very state and form that man's soul enters the realm of Barzakh. At the time of entering the other world, that is, the domain of the Hereafter, the first stage of which is Barzakh, in whichever state one's soul departs from the body, it assumes a form suited to it in the next world also.

It is the same form in which he is perceived by the inhabitants of Barzakh and by himself, when he first opens his eyes there, if he has not lost his sight to do so. Because, it is not necessary that man may enter the next world in the same physical state as he had in this world. God Himself says that on the Last Day some of the persons will ask God that why has He raised them as blind while they possessed eyes in the world. God will answer them that as they disregarded His clear signs in the world, they are forgotten and disregarded by God today.

O poor fellow! You had only external sight and were blind inwardly. You are realizing your blindness now, while you were already blind from the very beginning. You did not possess the inner vision, which could perceive His clear signs. You,

the poor creature, who was endowed with a perfect earthly body and proportionate form, alas you did not know that the measures of the hidden and sublime world are different from this world. You should strive for inner uprightness, so that you may be upright on the Last Day. Your spirit should be a human spirit, so that your form in the Barzakh and the Hereafter may be a human form.

You are mistaken to consider the world of the hidden realities, where the secrets of this world are to be unveiled and your deeds are to be disclosed, as similar to this world of appearances, where one can deceive others and can create chaos, confusion, and misjudgment. Your eyes and ears, your hands and feet, and other parts of your body will bear witness against your deeds in this world with their supernatural tongues. Some of them may also appear in their celestial forms.

So, my friend, it is necessary to keep open the ears of your heart. Be brave, and have mercy on your own self, so that you may leave this world in a human form, and may be counted as redeemed and virtuous. Mind you, these words repeatedly occur in the speeches and teachings of great thinkers, in the inspirations of mystics and in the transmissions of the truthful and infallible servants of God.

How To Regulate Human Instincts

It is possible that wahm, the power of imagination and invention, ghadhab-the power of passion and anger, and shahwah-the power of lust or

sensuality, also possess divine aspect, and may bring about felicity and good luck to man, if these powers are subjected to the dictates of reason and good sense and the teachings of prophets of God. They may become satanic forces if they are unleashed and the power of invention and imagination is allowed to rule and lead other two powers. It is not a secret that none of the prophets of God ever tried to eradicate the .powers of passion, sensuality or imagination completely

None of the messengers of God have ever demanded to completely kill sensuality and desire or to extinguish the fire of passion or anger and ignore the inventions of imagination. But they have rather advocated for controlling and bridling them and making them function under the command of reason and Divine Laws. For each one of these powers struggles to dominate others and win its goal, whatever mischief, .chaos, and confusion may be stirred up

For instance, the obstinate bestial self is determined to reach its goal even if it is resolved on committing adultery with married women in the Holy Ka'bah. Intractable power of passion arouses the self to win its objective even if it is contemplating to kill prophets and the friends of God. And the power of imagination, while devising satanic instruments, wants to go its own way, to cause corruption of the whole climate on .earth, and to create chaos and disorder in the world

The great prophets of God were sent to

this world with the light of Divine Laws. God revealed to them heavenly books, so that they may prevent people from indulging into extravagances and immoderations, and bring the human self under the control of reason and the law of Shari'ah. To bridle the human self is essential so that it may not exceed the measures of reason and Shari'ah. Hence, every individual who subordinates himself to the Divine Laws and principles of good sense is fortunate, and it is he who attains salvation.

He finds refuge in God, the Most Exalted and the Most High, from the dangers and misfortunes, which might befall him, and thus is saved from the disgrace of assuming those beastly and hideous forms that may accompany him in the Barzakh, in the grave and on the Last Day, as the result of his vicious deeds and corrupt practices.

How To Bridle Fancy And Imagination

The first condition for a mujahid in his struggle that he has to observe and abide by, at this juncture and at all other stages, is to control the flight of one's imagination, so that he can subjugate the Devil and his armies. Imagination is like a bird restless to fly, and sit on any tree it reaches. This flight may bring about many great misfortunes. Fancy is one of the tools of the Devil, with which he enslaves man and renders him helpless. With the help of fancy, he entices men to committing villainies and indecencies.

A mujahid who is determined on self-rectification, and who has made

up his mind to purify his inner self and banish satanic forces from there, should firmly hold the bridle of his imagination and let not it soar and wander about wherever it likes. He should try to prevent his mind from nursing corrupt and sinful thoughts, and always divert it to high and noble ideals. In the beginning, it appears to be a little difficult, since Satan and his forces may glorify bad things in your eyes. But with little .concentration and attention everything becomes easy

It is possible that as an experiment you may just think for a while, and will not be able to concentrate upon an object. Whenever you see that your thoughts are stooping to lowly and mean things, turn your attention aside from them and think about the worthier and nobler things. If you have been successful in your attempts, thank God Almighty for His help, and pursue these matters further. May God, out of His mercy, open the path of spiritual progress for you, and may you be invisibly guided in the straight path. May human deeds and right conduct be made easy for you. Be careful that vicious thoughts and vain fancies are induced by Satan, who wishes to fortify its .forces in the domain of your inner self

You, who are at war with Satan and his legions, and want to make the realm of your inner self a heavenly domain, are expected to be on guard against the guiles of the

cursed villain. You should drive away those thoughts that counter Divine command. God willing, you will be able to recapture this significant fortification from the unholy occupation of Satan and his allies, in this internal war. This fortification serves as a boundary (between good and evil). If you are victorious here you may hope for .greater and nobler victories

My dear friend, seek for God's help at every moment. Pray and beg humbly in the .court of your Lord

O God Almighty! Satan is a great enemy, who has enticed your great friends and prophets. O God! help this weak and entrapped servant of yours, and guard him against these vain ideas and these infirm thoughts that inflict me, so that he may succeed in his war against this strong enemy, who is threatening to destroy my felicity and humanity. O God! please accompany Thy servant and guide him so that he may .drive the Satan's armies from Your seat, and may clip the hands of this usurper

Estimation And Appraisal

The thing, which is to be strictly followed during this process, is the estimation and evaluation (of vices and virtues). An intelligent person should carefully examine the effects and demerits of each one of moral vices and bad deeds, which are the product of sensuality, passion and imagination, and are under the control of Satan. He has to compare them with the benefits and blessings of good deeds and moral and spiritual excellences, which are under the guidance of reason and religious law (Shari'ah) and

then decide which way is better to act. For instance, the advantages of obeying the dictates of uninhibited sensuality that gets hold of the human soul and firmly takes its roots there, and gives rise to many vices to flourish, may be taken into consideration.

In the course of time the sensual aptitudes develop, and a person does not hesitate to commit any of the vices, and tries all means and ways to obtain the sensual pleasure at any cost, and does not fail to perpetrate any crime, which he desires to commit, even if it results in something extremely vicious. As a result of letting loose one's passions several other vices are born and become his second nature. And he is more than ready to maltreat and subdue everyone who comes in his way. Those who react against oppressive activities and try to defend themselves, or show any signs of disagreement or hostility are crushed and oppressed by him.

He tries to repel all oppositions by all means, although it may lead to an outbreak of corruption in the world. In the same way, the person, who has surrendered himself to the demoniac power of imagination and lets it to be firmly rooted in his soul, does not hesitate to indulge in a fit of excessive passion and sensuality with all his satanic designs and treacheries and rule over the creatures of God by all kinds of unjust means, even if it is to dispossess a family of their belongings

.or stripping a city or a country of its resources

These are the achievements of these faculties, while they are active under the ignoble supervision of Satan. If we think about it, and examine the plight of such people, we shall notice that every one of them, despite the enormous strength they possess, and most of their wishes being fulfilled, they still nurture thousands of new desires that are yet to be fulfilled. It is not possible in this world that all the desires and .ambitions that we cherish be fulfilled here, since this world is the abode of obstacles

The elements of this world dispirit our wishes. Our desires are also not limited. For instance, the power of sensuality and lust acts in man in such a way that if he is given one woman, he is attracted to other women. If he is given an empire, he will hanker after some other empire. Man always desires for what he does not possess. In spite of this vanity of imagination and futility of human desire, the kiln of sensuality is .always hot, and its heat ever increasing, and our desires are never cooled down

Similarly, the forces of passion are implanted in human nature in such a way that even if he is made an absolute monarch of a state, he will be attracted towards another state, which he cannot get, and he will try to pounce on it with all the force he can muster. This power is also

ever increasing. Anyone who has any doubt is advised to examine his own self and other human beings belonging to the classes of poor, rich and powerful; he will agree with me. It is obvious that man is always allured by something, which he does not own. This is the human nature as conceived by various great Islamic thinkers and holy men, especially one should refer to a great master of divinity, Mirza Muhammad 'Ali .Shahabadi

Anyhow, even if man attains his goals, for how long can he be benefited from them? How long his youthful years are to continue? When the spring of youth fades out and the autumn of his life sets in, his heart has no more a zest for mirth and joy, his organs lose their vitality and those activities lose their relish. His eyes dim, his hearing is impaired, his sense of touch and other senses and faculties weaken. Ability to get pleasure declines or is completely lost. Then hosts of ailments make him an easy prey. His digestive, assimilative and excretory system fails, and his respiratory system cannot perform it: function properly. Nothing but deep sighs, displeasure, regret and .remorse are left to accompany him

Thus, the duration of our exploitation of these bodily powers, from the days when one gains consciousness of good and bad till the process of decline sets in, is not more than thirty or forty years, even for a person of very strong constitution. That too, if one does not

happen to come across all sorts of diseases and afflictions, which we witness every day and forget about. If, for the time being, we take it for granted (although it has no reality), that a man can attain the age of one hundred and fifty years, with all opportunities of involving oneself fully in all the three indulgences-sensuality, passion and imagination, excluding all the chances of coming across any adversities and misfortunes, even this period of time would prove short, and pass soon like the winds and what would be in store for you for the next world? What benefit will you derive from all these treasures of amusements for your eternal life? What will save you from the horrors of the day of doom, helplessness, desolation and loneliness? What will you present on the Day of Judgment, and how would you face God, His angels, and His ?chosen servants and prophets

Of course, nothing will accompany you except your wicked and sinful deeds, which will metamorphose you in such a form that would not be known to anybody except God. Everything that you have heard and conceived about the infernal fire, torments of the grave and agonies of the Doomsday, etc., you measured them with the worldly fire and worldly pains. What a gross error you committed. Fire of this world is relatively an accident, and all the horrors are easy to bear. Your estimation of the other world on .the basis of this one is imperfect and faulty

Even if the fire burning throughout the world is accumulated at one place, it will not be hot enough to burn the human soul. In the next world, besides burning and roasting the body it will burn the soul and incinerate the heart also. Whatever you have been listening about till now, is actually the hell of one's actions, which you will see in the Hereafter as a reality, for God Almighty has said:

(وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا.)

(And they find all that they did confronting them. (۱۸:۴۹)

You will have to face whatever you did in this world. If you thrived on the property of orphans, God alone knows in what state you will appear in hell and what comforts you will have to enjoy there as your reward. If here your harsh words have injured the hearts of people, this pain and discomfort caused to the hearts of the creatures of God, God alone knows, what punishment it will incur upon you in the Hereafter. You will know it only when you experience it what sort of pain and torture you have procured for yourselves. Because of your detractions, the other worldly and sublime form that was conceived for you is denied to you and you will. have to undergo the pains of chastisement.

This will be the hell of one's actions, which is comparatively milder, cooler and tolerable, and is reserved for those who committed sins in this world. But for those who have acquired the viciousness of character and villainy

of conduct like, greed, lust, hoarding, avarice, contentiousness, love of wealth, power and corporeal things, rapacity, ravenousness and other vices, the hell is their place, a place beyond human apprehension, a state and form which can never be anticipated .by any stretch of the imagination, and emanates from within the soul itself

The inhabitants of that hell will be so distressed that they will try to escape from it, (but in vain). In some of the authentic narrations, it occurs that there is a valley in hell, which is reserved for the proud, and which is named as saqar once it complained to God about the intensity of its heat, and asked Almighty for a relief, so that it might take a breath. After the relief was granted, when it breathed, its breath filled the hell .with fire

Sometimes one's vices may cause a human being to become a permanent dweller of hell. Because they take away from him his faith and belief. For instance, a vice like jealousy, according to authentic traditions, eats away faith as the fire consumes wood. Another example is that of the love of the world, worldly power and riches, which, according to authentic narrations, consume the faith of a believer more rapidly than two wolves let loose on a sheep herd without a shepherd, one attacking from the .front and the other from the back

Adoration for the worldly things and lust for power deprives a believer of his belief, and God forbid, this sinfulness results

in dark and ugly deeds, which finally leads to the loss of faith and one's end as an infidel, and the hell of the false beliefs and erroneous faith is severer, hotter and .darker than those two other hells, mentioned above

My friend, the higher knowledge has proved that the grades of intensity are infinite. The punishment is severer than what you imagine or what others imagine. If you do not believe in the arguments advanced by philosophers, or the revelations made to mystics, thanks to God, being a true believer, you have faith in the teachings of the prophets of God, and you consider all the reports recorded in the authentic books of the traditions which are accepted by all the Imamiyyah scholars as true and authentic. I hope that you believe in the prayers of infallible Imams, and have read the prayers and sermons uttered by Imam 'Ali (A), and the invocation by Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin .(A) uttered in the prayer of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali

My friend, reflect a little upon their subject matter and think for a while on their wordings. It is nowhere required to make a rapid reading of the lengthy prayer in a hurry without pondering over its meaning. You and I are not blessed with the spiritual state of Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin (A) to recite that lengthy prayer in a state of sustained ecstasy at one time. Try to read one third or one fourth of it every night with feeling, and meditate upon

its words. You may feel ecstatic while reading it. Apart from this, pay a little more attention to the meaning of Quranic verses, and see what punishment has been prescribed for the inhabitants of hell, to escape which they will pray to the Lord for death, and alas death also will not help, as God Almighty says:

(أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَا عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِی جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ کُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِینَ.)

Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of Allah, and I was indeed among the scoffers! ((۳۹:۵۶

What kind of regret it will be, of which Almighty is making an emphatic mention. Do not pass quickly, without pausing and meditating upon such verses of the Qur'an:

(یَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ کُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ کُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُکَارَى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُکَارَى وَلَکِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِیدٌ.)

On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant will be delivered of her burden, and thou (Muhammad) will see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong upon them. ((۲۲:۲

Here God Almighty is depicting the Doomsday. My friend, think yourself that, God forbid (na'udhu billah), the Quran is neither a story book, nor is it making jokes with you. What sort of condemnation it will be that will make people abandon their dear ones, and relieve pregnant women of their burden? What a great calamity it will be about which God Almighty, Whose greatness knows no extent,

Whose supremacy and authority has no limits and bounds, is commenting upon in .such solemn terms. What is going to happen God alone knows

Our intellect is insufficient to measure the extent of its magnanimity. If we study the transmissions and writings of the infallible Members of the Holy Household, and think over them, we shall see that the sight of misery and agony in that world will be quite .different from this world, and cannot be equated with the misfortunes of this world

Here I would like to quote a tradition from the great Shaykh of the Imamiyyah, al-Saduq, for you to demonstrate the meaning and extent of the misery, mentioned above. Nevertheless, this tradition narrated by him refers to the hell of the evil deeds and is comparatively a cooler place than other severer hells. I consider it essential to point out that al-Shaykh al-Saduq is the person who is held in great esteem and respect by all great religious scholars of rijal. He was born as the result of the prayer of the Imam (A), and was the object of great favor of Imam Mahdi (AF), and was .among great writers of Shiite religious books

I quote this tradition with reference to a chain of great Imamiyyah scholars, all of whom are considered as authentic narrators of hadith. Hence, if you are a true believer, you should have faith in the following tradition. The gist of the hadith is as :follows

رَوَى الصَّدُوقُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مَوْلاَنَا الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ،

قَالَ: بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ قَاعِداً إِذْ أَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ، وَهُوَ كَئِيبٌ، حَزِينٌ، مُتَغَيِّرُ اللَّوْنِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا جِبْرِيلُ، مَا لِي أَرَاكَ كَئِيباً حَزِيناً؟ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَكَيْفَ لا أَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَإِنَّمَا وُضِعَتْ مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ الْيَوْمَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ: وَمَا مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى أَمَرَ بِالنَّارِ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ، حَتَّى احْمَرَّتْ. ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى ابْيَضَّتْ. ثُمَّ أَمَرَ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى اسْوَدَّتْ وَهِيَ سَوْدَاءُ مُظْلِمَةٌ، فَلَوْ أَنَّ حَلَقَةً مِنَ السِّلْسِلَةِ الَّتِي طُولُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعاً وُضِعَتْ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا لَذَابَتِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ حَرِّهَا. وَلَوْ أَنَّ قَطْرَةً مِنَ الزَّقُّومِ وَالضَّرِيعِ قَطَرَتْ فِي شَرَابِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا لَمَاتَ أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ نَتْنِهَا. قَالَ: فَبَكَى رَسُولُ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَبَكَى جِبْرَئِيلُ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، فَبَعَثَ اللهُ إِلَيْهِمَا مَلَكاً فَقَالَ: إِنَّ رَبَّكُمَا يُقْرِؤُكُمَا السَّلامَ وَيَقُولُ لَكُمَا إِنِّي قَدْ أَمِنْتُكُمَا مِنْ أَنْ تُذْنِبَا ذَنْباً أُعَذِّبُكُمَا عَلَيْهِ.

One day the Prophet (S) of God was seated when Gabriel came into his presence, with a sad face and changed complexion. The Prophet (S) asked as to why he was looking so sad and grieved. Gabriel answered, ‘O Muhammad (S), why should I be not grieved, while today I saw the bellows of hell being set in. The Prophet (S) asked him what the bellows of hell were. Gabriel told him that it referred to the hell-fire, which according to the Commandments of God Almighty was ablaze for one thousand years. After it became red hot He ordered it to

burn for another one thousand years till it was white-hot. Then He commanded it to burn for one thousand years more till it turned black. Now that it was black and dark, if a slice of seventy cubits of it was to drop on this world, verily its heat would be sufficient to melt the whole world into fluid. If a single drop of its Zaqqum (an infernal tree, mentioned in the Quran proverbial for its extreme bitterness) and dari (something in hell more bitter than aloe, more fetid than carrion, and hotter than fire, which will be the food of the condemned) trickles down in the water reservoirs of the earth, everybody therein would die due to its stench. Thereupon the Prophet (S) wept and Gabriel also wept with him. On seeing this, God sent His angel, who came to them and said that God sent salaams to them along with the message that He exempted .them both from the committing of sins and the consequent punishments

My friend, there are a number of ahadith in this regard. Existence of hell and its horrible chastisements are among the essentials of all the religions of the world, which bring forward many arguments in favor of their necessity. And the great, mystics and saints have envisioned it even in this world. Try to imagine sincerely and contemplate the disheartening account of hell given in the tradition. If you consider it as probable only, even then should it not be sufficient to drive

us to woods like the mad? What is the reason for our complacence and ignorance? Have the angels of God given us the tidings of being exempted from this punishment ?as they had given one to the Prophet (S) and Gabriel

Whereas the Prophet (S) and the friends of God could not be oblivious of the fear of God till the ends of their lives. They could not eat and sleep properly because of that fear. Look at the life of Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A), whose weeping and moanings, lamentations and supplications melted human hearts. What is wrong with us that we do not feel ashamed? Even in our supplications to God, we so much violate and insult Divine principles, that a thousand pities on our thoughtlessness! Have pity on yourself and the extremity of the pangs of death. Again a thousand pities on our condition in Barzakh, the agonies of the Hereafter, and the Doomsday and its darkness! How !pitiable are we who have to face the horrors of hell and its chastisement

How To Cure Moral Maladies

My friend! arise, awake from the slumber, be aware of your negligence and make an effort till there is time to repent. Consider this opportunity as valuable, until you are alive, your faculties and your powers are still under control, and you are young. Think about a cure before it is too late, and before moral maladies overpower your existence, and evils take deep roots in your existence and take you in the grips of their

tentacles. Drive them away, find out a way of extinguishing the fire of your sensuality .and passion

The best remedy prescribed by mystics and moralists is to concentrate upon each one of the evil habits that you detect in yourself, and offer an effective resistance against them. Fight bravely against your carnal self. Act unceasingly all the time against those vicious yearnings. Pray Almighty to assist you in this battle. Undoubtedly after sometime hideous habits would leave you, and Satan and his legions would vacate the .fortress, and the battalions of heavenly armies would be installed in their stead

One of the moral maladies, which may destroy one, cause torment of the grave, and plague man in this world, is the maltreatment of the people of his household, his neighbors, his colleagues and others around him. It is the product of passion and sensuality. If the mujahid is determined on correcting himself, he can counter those impulses of indignation, resentment and vituperation with gentleness and kindness, remembering the Hereafter and the chastisements therein. He should curse the Devil .in his heart and take refuge in God

I give you word that if you behave persistently like this, after some time you will realize that your nature is totally transformed and good habits have taken the place of the bad ones. But if you behave according to the propensities of your nature, it is possible that they consume you in this world itself. I seek refuge in God from the anger, which when

present in an individual destroys him in both the worlds. At the same time it kills his spirit also, because possibly one may use some indecent words against Divine principles in a fit of anger, as so many times we hear people uttering words of heresy .and being guilty of apostasy thus

Philosophers say that the chances of being saved in a ship without a captain from the stormy waves of ocean are brighter than those of a man being saved in an outburst of wild passion. God forbid, that we should ever belong to that category of people who become aggressive during academic discussions, as some of our students suffer from this intemperance. You have to resist against this bad tendency. Act against it, especially on the occasions of formal functions, which are attended by a great .number of scholars and common men

During the discussions, if you see that the other party is justified in its argument, you are expected to admit your fault and confirm what opponents say. God willing, these meannesses will be eliminated in a short time. God forbid, that the words of some scholars, who claimed to be divinely inspired and said that it was revealed that the quarrel among the inhabitants of hell, mentioned by God, is that of the scholars and transmitters of ahadith, should ever be true. Even if you do not believe in the authenticity of this tradition, even then you should carefully try to get rid of this habit. See

:the following account

رُوِیَ عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحابِنا أَنَّهُمْ قالُوا: خَرَجَ عَلَیْنا رَسُولُ اللهِ، صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ، یَوْماً وَنَحْنُ نَتَمارَی فِی شَیْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الدِّینِ فَغَضِبَ غَضَباً شَدِیداً وَقالَ: إِنَّ الْمُمارِی قَدْ تَمَّتْ خَسارَتُهُ. ذَرُوا الْمِراءَ فَإِنَّ الْمُمارِی لا أَشْفَعُ لَهُ یَوْمَ الْقِیامَهِ. ذَرُوا الْمِراءَ فَإِنِّی زَعِیمٌ بِثَلاثِ أَبْیاتٍ فِی الْجَنَّهِ؛ فِی رِیاضِها وَأَوْسَطِها وَأَعْلاها، لِمَنْ تَرَکَ الْمِراءَ وَهُوَ صادِقٌ. ذَرُوا الْمِراءَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ ما نَهانِی عَنْهُ رَبِّی، بَعْدَ عِبادَهِ الأَوْثانِ، الْمِراءُ.

وَعَنْهُ، صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ لَقِیَ اللهَ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، بِهِنَّ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّهَ فِی أَیِّ بابٍ شاءَ: مَنْ حَسُنَ خُلُقُهُ وَخَشِیَ اللهَ فِی الْمَغِیبِ وَالْمَحْضَرِ وَتَرَکَ الْمِراءَ وَإِنْ کانَ مُحِقّاً.

It is narrated from many companions of the Prophet (S) that once as the Prophet (S) came to them they were engaged in wrangling over a religious issue. The Prophet (S) of Islam was greatly displeased and was indignant to this extent that they had never seen him before in such an anger. The Prophet (S) told them it was because of this habit of wrangling that their precursors were destroyed, and he added that a true believer would never wrangle. The Prophet (S) asked them to stop wrangling and told them that he would not act as an intercessor to any wrangler. Wrangling occupies the .second place after idolatry among the things forbidden by God Almighty

The Prophet (S) is reported to have also said that unless a believer refrains from wrangling and altercation he cannot know the truth, in spite of his position being .correct

There are various traditions in

this regard. How abominable it will be if we deprive ourselves of the intercession of the Prophet (S) for the sake of merely a trivial thing, which has no value, no merit whatsoever. Intellectual discussions, which would otherwise be the highest order of service and worship if undertaken with sincere motives, end in such a catastrophe and wipe out all his good deeds and acts of worship. In all circumstances, man should focus his attention on each of his vices individually, and eradicate them from the domain of his soul by restraining his carnal self. Once the trespasser is driven out, the rightful owner of the house can readily come to take possession.

Conclusion

Since the struggle of the self concludes here and man succeeds in driving off the legions of satanic armies from the empire of his soul, this land becomes the abode of angels of God and a place of worship of truthful servants of God. Thus, the task of pursuing the journey towards God becomes easier, and the road to humanism is illuminated.

The doors of blessings from heaven and their ascending steps are opened to him, and the doors of hell and the descending steps thereof are closed on him. God Almighty views him with mercy and benevolence and unites him with His faithful and His blessed servants. The path to divine knowledge, which is the ultimate purpose of creation of mankind and jinn, is opened to him. God Almighty guards him through this hazardous path.

I wished to

refer to the third stage of self (nafs), wherein another struggle against the deceptions and temptations of Satan takes place. But, on later thought, this description seems to .be out of place here, so I left it undiscussed

('Second Hadith: Ostentation (Riya

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِی عُمَيْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِی الْمَغْرَا عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ خَلِيفَهٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: كُلُّ رِيَاءٍ شِرْكٌ. إِنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ لِلنَّاسِ كَانَ ثَوَابُهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ لِلهِ كَانَ ثَوابُهُ عَلَى اللهِ.

On the authority of the above-mentioned narrators), Yazid ibn Khalifah reports from) Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said, “Riya in any of its forms amounts to shirk, (polytheism); verily, one who works for the people, his reward lies with them, and one (who works for God his reward lies with God.”(١

Riya’ means to falsely make oneself appear to be virtuous, good natured or a true believer in God before the people for the sake of earning their respect and admiration, or with the purpose of gaining good reputation among them. The hypocrite feigns integrity, uprightness, virtue, honesty And piety without an authentic intention of acquiring these traits for the sake of God. It has several grades and .degrees

:The first stage is comprised of two steps

At the first step an individual makes a display of his religious beliefs, and shows off .١ his knowledge of the religious teachings in order to project himself as an honest person in the eyes of people to gain their confidence

.Usul al-Kafi, vol. ٢, p. ۴٠٢ -١

and respect. Such a kind of person tries to make a display of his trust in God and His Power, saying that he does not believe in any being except Him. He also tries to present himself as a staunch believer through various means, especially by declaring that he depends on none but God. Or such a person, with his gestures and utterances, poses himself to be a staunch follower of the true faith, and this is a more common kind of riya' than the first one. For instance, when the trust in God or submission to His Will is discussed, he wags his head in affirmation with a sigh, and thus deceives people .giving an impression that he is one of the true believers

The second step on the path of riya' is represented by those who eradicate false .۲ belief from their hearts and, through such purification, want to attain power and respect among people; they sometimes articulate their belief overtly, sometimes .make a covert display of their purity

:The second stage, too, is comprised of two steps

.At the first step an individual demonstrates his piety and virtuous deeds .۱

At the second step one pretends to have done away with the antitheses of piety and .۲ virtue, and behaves in such a manner as if he is free from all vices, and the aim of all .this is to win the confidence of others

The third stage of Riya', which is considered to be overt by the fuqaha', also consists of

p: ۱۰۰

:two steps

The first step is marked by an individual's performance of the prescribed forms of .١ piety, prayers and good deeds in front of other people with the intention of demonstrating his good qualities and praiseworthy habits, or by his posture as a person who strictly adheres to the religious commands on purely rational grounds, and thus wishing to win the hearts of people and attracting their attention towards himself. Such acts, whether performed in total or in part, with the motive of Riya', to .please the others, are discussed in the books of fiqh

.At the second step, one abstains from evil deeds for the purpose of riya' only .٢

Riya' In Faith or Creed

Remember that hypocrisy in religious faith is the worst kind of hypocrisy; its retribution also is the severest and its bad effects are far greater and more dangerous than those of other forms of hypocrisy. One who is guilty of this sin, if he does not believe genuinely in those ideas which he pretends to believe in, is counted among the munafiqun (hypocrites), whose place is in the Fire, and he is doomed to eternal damnation and his punishment is the severest of punishments. But if he believes in them, and for the sake of winning peoples' hearts and for obtaining worldly honor and dignity he makes an ostentation of them, though he is not reckoned among munafiqun, this kind of hypocrisy will cause the light of faith to fade away from his heart and to make the darkness of infidelity

.and faithlessness to occupy the domain of his heart

Because in the first instance this person commits polytheism (shirk) of the covert type; while his religious beliefs and acts should purely be meant for God and His Holy Essence, he is guilty of committing the sin of doing them for others and thus makes them to share what should absolutely belong to Him only. In this way he makes others partners to God and has given permission to the Devil to occupy his heart as if it does not belong to God. It has been mentioned earlier that faith emerges from the depths of the heart, and in this matter mere abstract knowledge does not suffice. It has been stated in the tradition that any kind of riya' is polytheism, but this vice, this disastrous atrocity, this hidden cruelty (to one's own self), and this vicious habit, results in nullifying the good deeds, and in surrender of the realm of the heart to other than .God

The darkness of this vice causes man to leave this world as an unbeliever in God, and the feigned faith that he had assumed proves nothing more than a senseless and empty profession; it is a form without content, a body without soul and a skull without brain; and in no way is acceptable to God. This fact is confirmed by a tradition :mentioned in al-Kafi, narrated by 'Ali ibn Salim

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، يَقُولُ: قَالَ اللهُ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَنَا خَيْرُ شَرِيكٍ؛ مَنْ

p: ١٠٢

أَشْرَکَ مَعِیَ غَیْرِی فِی عَمَلٍ عَمِلَهُ لَمْ أَقْبَلْهُ إِلا مَا کَانَ لِی خَالِصاً.

The narrator of the tradition says that he heard Imam al-Sadiq (A) saying that God Almighty said, "I am the best of friends; one who makes others My partners in any matter, his deeds are not acceptable to Me. I accept only those acts that are purely (done for My sake."(۱)

Hence, it is clear that if the spiritual acts (of the heart) are not performed with sincerity of the heart, they will neither be the object of attention of the Almighty, nor will He acknowledge them, and they will be credited in the account of that partner-the person, for whose sake they were performed. Thus the spiritual acts performed for the sake of somebody else, not for God, will surpass the limits of polytheism, and will enter the domain of kufr (infidelity). It may even be said that the performer of such .adulterated acts would be treated as one of the munafiqun

As his polytheism is not visible, his hypocrisy also is hidden. He, the poor fellow, considers himself to be a believer, whereas in reality he is an idolater, and he is condemned to taste the chastisement prescribed for the munafiqun. How pitiable is .the plight of one whose good deeds are to terminate in nifaq

Difference Between Knowledge And Belief

Know that faith or belief is something different from the knowledge of God, the Unity of His Being, and His other Attributes--like sifat al-kamaliyyah (the Attributes of Perfection), the Positive Attributes, sifat

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۴۵۰ -۱

al-jalaliyyah (the Attributes of Glory), and the Negative Attributes, etc. and the knowledge of angels, holy scriptures, and the Last Day. Anyone who possesses the knowledge of all these things is not necessarily a believer. The Devil possesses the knowledge of all these things more than I and you or any other individual, but still he is an unbeliever. The faith is a yearning of the heart-an inner experience, which if not .genuine, does not become faith

Anyone who has gained knowledge of religion through rational demonstrations and arguments, ought to submit to them whole-heartedly with the totality of his being and obey the call of his heart dutifully i.e. with complete surrender to God, with humility and fear-and accept all the responsibilities expected of him sincerely without any question. Only then he can become a perfect mumin. Culmination of the faith is tranquility and peace of mind. When the light of faith is stabilized, it brings with it .tranquility of the heart, and this is something which does not issue from knowledge

It is possible that reason may accept something, which is according to its dictates and logic, but the heart may not be ready to agree with it, thus making knowledge useless. For instance, you know through your reason that a dead person cannot do any harm and that all the dead in the world do not possess any power of action, even as much power as is possessed by a fly, and that all the physical and spiritual

faculties depart as soon as one is dead; but since your heart has not accepted it and has not approved of the judgment of the mind, you cannot spend a dark night with a dead body. But if your heart yields to your mind and approves of its judgment, this job will no more be difficult for you. After some effort the heart resigns to the dictates of .reason, then no dread of the dead remains in the heart

Therefore, it is clear that the submission, which is the gratification and comfort of the heart, is quite a different thing from knowledge, which is the gratification of the mind. It is possible that one can logically prove the existence of the Great Intelligent Designer, the Unity of His Divine Being, the Day of Judgment and other true beliefs, but such a belief cannot be considered as faith (iman), and the person cannot be regarded as a mu'min, but he may be counted among the non-believers, hypocrites .and polytheists

Today my eyes and yours are closed, and we do not possess any divine vision. Our terrestrial eyes are unable to perceive, but when the hidden is revealed and the kingdom of heaven is manifested, the physical world vanishes and reality is disclosed; you will realize that you were not a believer in God, and your rational judgment was not congruous with your faith. Unless the words (لا اله إلا الله) —there is no god except God— are inscribed on the tablet of the

.heart with the pen of reason, man is not a true believer in the Unity of God

When this sacred and holy dictum is impressed on the heart, the domain of the heart turns by itself into the kingdom of God Almighty. Then only man does not see anyone else as efficient in the realm of truth; he does not expect any rank, any distinction or riches from anybody else; he does not seek for honor and fame with the help of .others; and his heart does not become hypocritical and profane

Therefore, if you see that riya' is stealing into your heart, you should realize that your heart has not really surrendered itself to reason, and faith has not illuminated your heart yet; for you consider others to be your God and see them as efficient agents in the world, and you do not trust Him, the only God; it means that you have joined the .company of hypocrites, polytheists and idolaters

'Dangerous Effects Of Riya

O, you given to riya', who have entrusted your truthful beliefs and religious understanding to the custody of the enemy of God—the Devil, and have attributed to others what specifically belongs to God, you have exchanged those lights which would have illuminated your heart and spirit, and would have proved to be the source of your salvation and eternal bliss, which would have been responsible for being blessed with Beatific Vision and acquiring Divine nearness, with the dreadful darkness of ,eternal misfortunes; you have lost the other-worldly treasures

and have alienated yourself from the most sacred threshold of the Beloved, and have .deprived yourself of the sight of the visage of the Most High

Be prepared for the darkness, which is not to be followed by any ray of light; the scorn and shame from which there is no release; the diseases which have no cure; the death after which there is no life; and the fire which is ignited from within the depths of the heart to engulf the whole region of your spirit, as well as the realm of the body. It is beyond your capacity and mine to conceive or perceive the intensity of that fire, :as God Almighty has mentioned in His Holy Book

(نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَهُ. الَّتِی تَطَّلِعُ عَلَی الْأَفْئِدَهِ.)

(It is) the fire of Allah, kindled, which leapeth up over the hearts of men. (۱۰۴:۶-۷)

The effect of the fire, which is kindled by God, will be that it would consume the hearts as well. No fire can consume the heart except that which is kindled in the hell. If the belief in the Unity of God, which is inherently engrained in human nature, is abandoned and is replaced with idolatry and infidelity, no intercession of any intercessor will be available to him, and man will be destined to suffer eternal damnation. What kind of chastisement will it be? It will be the effect of the Divine .wrath, issuing from His sense of Honor

Thus, my friend, do not make yourself an object of the Divine

wrath for the sake of an illusion, an insignificant and trivial popularity in the eyes of weak creatures of God, and for the sake of worthless attention of hopeless human beings. Do not make a bargain of those Divine blessings, those infinite favors and benevolences with popularity among people, which is not even effective and long-lasting, from which you cannot derive any benefit except inviting ultimate shame and regret. And while your relations are severed with this world of illusion and deception .and you cease to act, no regret and sorrow will be of avail

'An Advice For Getting Rid Of The Curse Of Riya

point

What I am going to mention here to you is expected to work effectively for curing this disease of the heart, your as well as others'. It shall be also according to the rational dictates as well as is in conformity with the truths of revelation and tradition of the Ma'sumin (the infallibles). It is as well verifiable on the basis of the teachings of the Quran and your and my reason. God Almighty, by means of His all embracing power and might, which governs the whole universe and is immanent in the realms of all possible beings, takes under His control the hearts of all His servants, as no one is outside the range of His power and the domain of His domination; and no one should occupy the hearts of human beings without His permission and His creative Will; not even the person himself has any control over his own heart without the permission

of God Almighty. This fact has been revealed implicitly and explicitly in the Quran as well as the traditions of the members of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) of the Prophet .((S

Hence, God Almighty is the real owner of the hearts and has sovereignty over them, and you, a helpless and weak creature of Him, you cannot claim to be the master of your heart, without His leave. His Will is predominant over ours and other creatures' resolution. Therefore, your hypocrisy and deceit, if it is meant for attracting the attention of His servants and for earning respect and popularity among them, know that it cannot bear any fruits, for this is totally beyond your powers, and it belongs to .the jurisdiction of His power

He is the owner and the ruler of the hearts. He makes the hearts of the people a seat of love for whomsoever He likes. It is possible that your act produces a result just contrary to your wish. Pay attention to what we have seen and heard about the double-faced hypocrites, whose hearts were not pure; they were ultimately condemned to be disgraced; whatever they intended, they could not achieve, but something that they did not desire happened to them. The following tradition in al-:Kafi points to the same fact

عَنْ جَرَّاحِ المَدَائِنِیِّ، عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، فِی قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلاً صَالِحاً وَلا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَداً.) قَالَ: الرَّجُلُ يَعْمَلُ شَيْئاً مِنَ الثَّوَابِ لا يَطْلُبُ بِهِ

p: ١٠٩

وَجْهَ اللهِ إِنَّمَا يَطْلُبُ تَزْكِيَهَ النَّاسِ يَشْتَهِی أَنْ يُسْمِعَ بِهِ النَّاسَ، فَهَذَا الَّذِی أَشْرَکَ بِعِبَادَهِ رَبِّهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ أَسَرَّ خَيْراً فَذَهَبَتِ الأَيَّامُ أَبَداً حَتَّى يُظْهِرَ اللهُ لَهُ خَيْراً، وَمَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُسِرُّ شَرّاً فَذَهَبَتِ الأَيَّامُ أَبَداً حَتَّى يُظْهِرَ اللهُ لَهُ شَرّاً.

The narrator of the tradition, Jarrah al-Mada'ini, reports from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he asked the Imam about the words of the Almighty that 'whosoever is desirous of meeting his Creator, he should perform virtuous deeds and should not ascribe any partner to God in his worship,' seeking an explanation. Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, 'A person who performs good deeds but not for the sake of being blessed with the vision of his God, his acts are aimed at being considered as pious by the people, and he wishes that people should know about his deeds; such a person is counted among polytheists, who have ascribed partners to God.' The Imam (A) continued: 'There is none in the world, who has concealed his good deeds and after passage of time God has not revealed them. And there is none in the world who could conceal his wicked deeds for ever, for they were exposed by God before he passed away from the world.'(۱)

Hence, my dear friend! try to be worthy in the eyes of God. Try to win the hearts of the creatures by first pleasing the real owner of the hearts, so that He comes to your rescue. Work for the sake of God. As a

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۴۵۳.

consequence God Almighty, besides showering His favors and excellences upon you in the Hereafter, will bestow His honors and favors on you in this world as well, and will befriend you. He will raise your status in the eyes of people and will exalt you in both the worlds. But the only thing that you have to do is to sincerely cultivate the love .of God in your heart, untainted and unspoiled, with struggle and effort

Purify your inner self so that your actions also will be pure and untainted by the love of the world or hatred of fellow beings; your spirit should be pure and untainted and all the infirmities and corruptions of the soul should be eliminated. Of what advantage is the love or hatred of the weak creatures of God, and gaining favor and name among them? Even if it has some benefit, it is insignificant and short-lived. It is possible that this love of the world may lead you to hypocrisy, and God forbid, it may convert you .into a polytheist or a hypocrite or an unbeliever

If you are not disgraced in this world, you will be surely disgraced in the other world, in Almighty's court of justice, in front of His truthful and worthy servants, in front of His esteemed prophets and those angels who are nearest to God, and you will have to hang down your head in shame, and you will be left in a state of utter helplessness. Can you

imagine the disgrace of that day? God alone knows what sort of darkness is to follow :that disgrace. It will be the day, as God Almighty has said

(وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنتُ تُرَابًا.)

(And the disbeliever will cry: 'Would that I were dust'. (۷۸:۴۰

Then it will be of no good. You, poor fellow, for the sake of a trifling love, for the sake of a fame of no avail among the creatures of God, you did not care for the promised Divine favors and have failed to gain His good pleasure, and have incurred His .indignation and wrath instead

The deeds by means of which you could have gained Divine favors, could have secured a happy and blissful life in eternity, and could have attained the highest station in the highest heaven; you have replaced it with the darkness of polytheism and hypocrisy, and have procured for yourself regret, shame and the severest chastisement, and have converted yourself into a 'sijjini' (an inhabitant of the lowest or dungeon of hell) instead. It occurs in the tradition in al-Kafi that it has been reported from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Prophet (S) said: 'Indeed when the angel of God joyously takes to the higher heaven the good deeds of a man, as he carries the good deeds heavenward, God Almighty orders him to place those deeds in 'Sijjin', (since they were not performed for Him alone.(۱)

You and I cannot imagine what 'Sijjin' is, and which kind of demons are appointed there; and

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, the chapter concerning riya'.

you cannot contemplate the horrors inflicted upon the sinners there. And once we have been made to face it, it will not be possible for us to get rid of it, as all the means of repentance shall be cut off. Wake up my friend! and cast away your negligence and carelessness, and weigh your actions in the balance of your reason, before they are weighed and measured in the other world. And cleanse the mirror of your heart of the rust of polytheism, hypocrisy, and two-facedness.

Do not allow the rust of impurity of polytheism and infidelity to gather in such a way that it cannot be cleansed with the fire of the other world. Do not allow the light of your nature to be turned into the gloom of apostasy. Do not be a traitor to yourself and do not destroy what God has entrusted to you, calling it:

(فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِی فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا.)

(It is) the nature (framed) of Allah in which He hath created man. (۳۰:۳۰)

Therefore, burnish the mirror of the heart, so that the light of Divine magnificence may be reflected in it, and may make you forget this world and everything in it, and your heart is kindled with the fire of His love, so that all other attachments and associations may be dissolved in such a manner that you do not spurn a single moment for the sake of the worldly things; and you derive such a pleasure from His remembrance that all the

animal pleasures may appear to you a gimmick. If you cannot attain this station, even then do not give up the gifts of God that are promised to be given in the next world and are mentioned in the Quran and the traditions of the Ma'sumin (A), for the sake of gaining the short-lived favor of the weak creatures of God. Do not deprive yourself of all the Divine favors and do not make a bargain of the eternal felicity with the .everlasting distress

Sincerity In Action

Know that the real King of kings, the true Giver of real bounties, has bestowed upon us all these favors. He created all these things for us and prepared them for us even before we came into this world. He made our food a balanced diet and acceptable to our weak stomach-a patron and servant who serves us with an instinctive and natural love. He created for us suitable climes and weathers and has bestowed upon us all other seen and unseen favors here and in the other world, and after piling up all these gifts for us, He asks us to keep our hearts pure for His occupation, so that we .ourselves may be benefited from His presence

In spite of all these warnings and cautions we still do not obey Him and do not pay heed to His words and do not act according to His wish. What an act of gross transgression. With whom are we trying to wage a war, the consequences of

which we will have to face? Any slightest harm cannot be caused to His Kingdom, and we cannot exclude ourselves from His reign of power either. If we are acting like the :polytheists we are causing harm to ourselves, because

(فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْ الْعَالَمِينَ.)

(Lo! Allah is independent of (all) creatures. (٣:٩٧

He does not need our worship, our service or our obedience. Any disobedience, polytheism and two-facedness on our part will not cause any harm to His Empire, but the Most Merciful of the merciful—, His boundless mercy and— (أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ) as He is compassion, and His perfect wisdom require of us the pursuance of the right path, and for this purpose He made clear the difference between good and evil, beautiful and ugly to us and warned us of the perils and hazards to be met on the road of .human perfection and the path of true felicity

We are indebted to God Almighty for this great guidance and we have to show, with all humility, great respect towards Him in our worships, our devotion and our supplications, whose importance we cannot comprehend unless we gain an other-worldly vision. As long as we sojourn in this narrow physical world, confined to the limits of the sequence of time and shackles of space, we cannot comprehend the infiniteness of the realm of His power, and we cannot even thank Him in our prayers .and supplications for His guidance

Never let the idea enter our mind, that by our service and

devotion we are doing some favor to His prophets, His chosen servants, and the great ulama of the Ummah. They are our benefactors, who have taken the charge of leading the Ummah towards felicity and deliverance, and who have accepted the responsibility of our emancipation from the darkness and shadows of ignorance and .misfortunes, taking us towards the realms of light and joy and greatness

What a great responsibility they took upon themselves, and what horrible pains and troubles they underwent for the sake of our instruction, in order to deliver us from those obscurities and darknesses, that were the result of vain beliefs and compound ignorance, and the chastisements that were to befall us as a result of our bad habits and villainies. They wanted to save us from those hideous forms and dreadful figures in the other world that would be the outcome of our wicked deeds, and they helped us to reach the regions of light, joy and comfort and the spheres of serenity and .composure, whose image our mind would fail to visualize

This physical world in spite of its vastness is so limited and narrow that we cannot imagine a heavenly hour with our this-worldly vision. Our vision does not possess enough power to behold the magnificence of that world, which has been described in the speeches of the holy prophets of God, especially in the all-embracing revelations of the Khatim al-nabiyyin (Seal of the prophets), who perceived those truths through ,Divine revelations, saw them

.heard them, and then asked us to acquire them

And we, like recalcitrant children, disobey the commands of the wise, and even do not pay heed to the dictates of our own reason, always being more than ready to oppose the Divinely guided ones. And those sanctified pious souls, out of the love and kindness that they possessed for the creatures of God, did never fall short of their duty, did never appeal to our meaner and baser faculties by bribing them to attract us towards heaven and felicity; they never tried to make us yield through intimidation or .force

They did not either demand any remuneration or reward for the services they kindness for his— (مَوَدَّهُ ذِی الْقُرْبَی) (rendered. The remuneration asked by the Prophet (S kinsfolk—, which is not really a payment for his services, is also meant for our own benefit, being the brightest of our achievements in the next world. Our sense of indebtedness to them in fact serves ourselves and we are benefited more from it than ?they are. How are they benefited by the righteous acts of poor beings like us

In what way will our sincerity and obedience do them any good? In what way do you and I consider our humble selves benefactors of the guides of the Ummah, from an ordinary faqih to the great Prophet (S) and God Almighty? All of them have in their own right fulfilled their function of guiding us and showing the right path, for which

we are indebted to them and even a fraction of it we cannot pay back in this world. :Nothing of this world is worthy of the repayment of their debt

فَلِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلأَوْلِيائِهِ المِنَّهُ.

.It is to God, His Prophet (S), and His saints to whom all owe gratitude

:As God Almighty has said

(قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلْ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ.)

Say: Deem not your surrender a favor unto me; nay, but Allah does confer a favor on you, inasmuch as He hath led you to the faith, if ye are earnest. Lo. Allah knows the (Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Seer of what you do. (۴۹:۱۷-۱۸

Hence, if we are sincere in our faith in God, it is in itself a favor bestowed upon us by God. God Almighty is Omniscient, and has the knowledge of the hidden. He is Omniscient, knows the inner, hidden reality of all our actions, and He is fully aware of .the nature of our faith and the extent and degree of our submission to His Will

We, the helpless creatures, who do not know the reality, acquire our knowledge from the faqih and think that we have done favor to him. We offer congregational prayers behind an ‘alim, and we assume that we have conferred a favor on him, whereas, in fact, we are indebted to him. We do not realize this, and, therefore, this faulty outlook turns the effects of our deeds upside down and

.drags us into 'Sijjin' making our actions worthless

'The Second Stage Of Riya

point

At this stage, though riya' is of lesser intensity than it is at the first stage, but it is possible that if the hypocrite does not heed the warnings, and repeatedly behaves in the same way (the riya' of action) it is likely to terminate in the riya' of the former stage-the riya' of faith. We have already mentioned in the exposition of the previous tradition that in the 'Alam al-malakut (the celestial world) man may have a different form other than the human form. Those forms will be in accordance with the state of .one's soul and its traits

If you possess good human qualities, in the other world those qualities will retain you in the human form, provided they are not deviated from the path of moderation. Good faculties will be considered as true merits only when the sensual self does not interfere with them, and the self does not play any role in their formation. Our respected teacher and Shaykh Ayatullah Shahabadi used to say that the measure of the false and invalid spiritual practice and true religious spiritual struggle is as to what extent selfishness is involved in such practices, i.e. whether all spiritual effort is for .God or for selfish motives

If the wayfarer on the heavenly journey treads a selfish path and his spiritual exercises are meant for acquiring powers for worldly ends, his efforts are rendered invalid, and his suluk (progress on mystic path) will

lead him to the calamity of the other world. The false claims of spirituality are usually made by such people. And if the wayfarer treads the right path, and is genuinely in search of God, his devotion is within the bounds of the Shari'ah, and God will help him, :as promised in the following verse of the Quran

(وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا.)

(As for those who strive for Us, We surely guide them to Our paths. (۲۹:۶۹

Hence, his actions will lead him to felicity; egoism will be eliminated and self-conceit and pride will recede. This is quite clear that anyone who demonstrates his good deeds before people, his aim is a selfish aim, and he will be branded as a selfish, self-conceited, egoistic and egocentric person, and his godliness will be considered as nothing but false and pretentious, which will invalidate his good deeds. As the domain of your existence is replete with the feelings of self-love, the lust for wealth, power and fame, and the wish for ruling over the creatures of God, your good deeds and your excellences cannot be adjudged as virtuous deeds, and your moral behavior is .far away from truly religious morality

The operating force in your realm is satanic and your inner state is not a human condition. When you will open your eyes in the other world, you will perceive yourself in an inhuman form, similar to one of those of the devils. For such selves, which are dens of the Satan, it is

impossible to gain religious knowledge and learn the spirit of tawhid. Unless the realm of your inner self is converted into a human state and your heart is purged of impurities and unholiness, you cannot be benefited from spiritual exercises, as God :Almighty states in a hadith qudsi

لا تَسَعُنِى أَرْضِى وَلا سَمَائِى، بَلْ يَسَعُنِى قَلْبُ عَبْدِىَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.

Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is .the heart of the man of faith, which can contain Me

There is no clearer sign in the earth and in the heavens of the elegance of the Beloved .(than the heart of a true believer (mu'min

The believer's heart is in the occupation of God, not at the disposal of the self. The :heart of the believer is not self-willed, nor is it vagrant. It is said of it

قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ بَيْنَ إِصْبِعَىِ الرَّحْمانِ، يُقَلِّبُهُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ.

The heart of the true believer (mu'min) lies between two fingers of God, that He may .turn it whatever way He pleases

O you, the poor creature, who worships the self and the Devil and ignorance are the agencies operating in the realm of your heart, you yourself have prevented the hands of God from handling your heart. What sort of faith you are required to possess that your heart be the object of Divine illumination, absolute rule of the Truth may prevail ?there

Make it a point that unless you change yourself, and as long as the bad habit of ostentatiousness and vanity

dominates your deeds, you will be branded as an unbeliever and you will be grouped with the munafiqun (hypocrites), even though you imagine yourself to be a believer in God and as one who has resigned himself to the Will of God.

The Value Of Human Existence As A Trustee Of Divine Honor

My friend! wake up from the slumber of forgetfulness and carelessness, be aware, do not let sleep overtake your senses, and know that God Almighty has created you for His own sake, as stated in one hadith qudsi:

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ؛ خَلَقْتُ الأَشْيَاءَ لَکَ وَخَلَقْتُکَ لأَجْلِی.

O progeny of Adam, We have made everything for you and you for Our service.

He has made your heart His own habitation. You and your hearts are the abodes of Divine honor. God Almighty is intolerant regarding His Dignity and honor. Do not be careless in this regard, and do not justify any violation of the Divine principles; and be afraid of His retribution so that you may not be disgraced and made infamous in this world in such a way that despite all efforts you are not able to undo what may befall you.

You are guilty of violation of Divine honor in your heart that belongs to the celestial world, in front of the angels of God and His prophets. The moral excellences through which the saints of God (awliya' Allah) acquired resemblance to Him, are being surrendered by you to others than God, and you are surrendering your heart, the seat of God, to His enemy, thus committing shirk (polytheism) in the

.heart of your hearts

Be afraid of God Almighty, Who besides bringing down your other-worldly image and degrading you in front of His angels and His prophets, will also expose and dishonor you in this world itself and you will be condemned to unmeasured indignity which shall be also irreparable, and irremediable, an infamy that cannot be redressed. God the— (أَرْحَمُ الرّاحِمِينَ) Almighty is Sattar, He conceals the sins, but He is jealous also. He is the severest(أَشَدُّ المُعَاقِبِينَ) — Most Merciful of the merciful—, but at the same time He is of the punishers— also. He Himself says that He covers up bad deeds as long as they do not cross certain limits. God forbid, lest the gravity of your deeds should arouse His anger and should it overcome His tolerance and willingness to conceal sins, as you .have read in the hadith

Hence, come to your senses, seek refuge in God and turn back to Him, for God Almighty is the Compassionate and always seeks for an excuse to shower His mercy. If you ask for His forgiveness, He will readily forgive you, and will cover up your blemishes and past deeds, so that no one will be able to know about them, and He will make you a man of great distinctions, a paragon of virtues and an image of His .Attributes

He will make your will consummate in the next world as His own Will is executed throughout the cosmos. It is narrated in a hadith that

when the people are placed in the Paradise, a message from the Almighty will be given to them and its purport will be as follows: 'From the One who is Eternal and Immortal to him who is also eternal and immortal: Whatever I desire to bring into existence I command it to be and it comes into being; from this hour it has been decreed that you also command whatever you desire to bring into existence and your wish would be obeyed.'

Therefore, do not be egocentric, and subordinate your will to the Will of God Almighty; He will then make you an instrument and manifestation of His Will. He will give you power in the realms under His control, and bestow upon you the capacity to create in the Hereafter. (Of course, this is not the same as tafwid, which is a false notion, as proved elsewhere.)

Now, my friend, do as you please; either accept it or reject it. But know, that God Almighty is not in need of you or me or any other creature, and He has no need of our service and sincerity.

Riya' In Worship

point

The third stage also is divided into several sections.

Section I

The riya' of this kind is more common and manifest than those mentioned above. Because we ordinary human beings usually do not belong to the above-mentioned two states. For this reason, the Devil cannot get hold of us in the way he encroaches upon those who belong to the other states. But since the majority of the

worshippers express their devotion to God through formal prayers, the Devil commonly intervenes at this stage more frequently. Sensual temptations are also .commoner at this stage

In other words, since such type of people tend to seek the physical pleasures of heaven through their actions, and they aspire to attain higher station by performing good deeds and abstaining from performing wicked ones, the Devil finds an access through this way; and he nurtures the roots of riya' and deceit with great care, so that it may bear the fruits that are desired by him. He transforms their virtues into vices, .and makes them to enter hell through the path of ritual worship

The acts by means of which they aim to secure paradise for themselves are transformed by him into the means of their destruction and doom. The deeds, which would have led one to 'Illiyyin-the highest heaven, are so distorted that their performer is thrown into Sijjin by angels at the command of God. Therefore, persons who lay greater emphasis on this aspect (i.e. formalistic) and ignore other aspects, have nothing except apparently good deeds to secure salvation in the next world; they are required to be more cautious, so that this provision also may not be snatched away from their hands and they may not be consigned to the flames of hell and deprived of felicity for ever. They should watch over their acts lest the doors of heaven be closed and the doors of hell be opened

.to them

?’How To Combat Riya

Most often the sanctimonious person himself does not know that this particular vice has penetrated his deeds and his deeds have now assumed hypocritical proportions and hence become worthless. Because the temptations of the Devil and the self are so unobservably shadowy and subtle and the path of humanity is so delicate and tenuous that unless anyone is extremely discriminate, he cannot understand their .inherent evil

He imagines that his actions are meant for pleasing God, whereas they are serving the interests of the Devil. Since man is naturally created self-centered, the veil of self-love and egoism covers his flaws and vices from his own eyes. God willing, we shall also discuss this subject while commenting upon certain other ahadith; I ask for God’s .help in this regard

For instance, the acquisition of religious knowledge, is one of the important religious duties and a kind of worship; but a man busy attaining excellence in this field is liable to fall an easy prey to the vice of riya’, which seizes his heart in such a way that he .himself is not aware and the same thick curtain of self-love obstructs his vision

He desires to gain an important position in the eyes of great scholars and men of distinction and honor, by solving an important problem in such a way that no other person has solved it before; he tries to project himself as a person distinguished from others by presenting the subject in a unique way, to make himself

the focus of everyone's attention; with an air of self-assurance, he assumes that if anyone among the scholars and dignitaries eulogizes him in flattering terms, he will .be able to receive the applause and praise of the whole gathering

The poor fellow fails to realize that even if he earns worldly fame and honor among scholars or the elite, he will be disgraced in the eyes of the King of kings, and these actions of his will lead him to Sijjin. This act of riya' is also accompanied with some other vices, like the wish for humiliating and insulting others, or injuring the feelings of his brother in faith, or sometimes being rude to a believer; each one of these vices is enough for landing him in hell. If again your deceptive self falls in the snares of its own guiles and succeeds in convincing you that your aim has been to make known a tenet of Shari'ah and pronouncing the word of truth, which is one of the most meritorious acts of religious devotion, and that you do not aim at demonstrating your spiritual superiority, you ought to interrogate your self by asking that if a friend of yours had solved the same religious issue in a better way and had defeated you in the gathering of those scholars and highly placed persons, even then would you have taken the ?same position

If it is so, you were true to your own self. But if your self again is

bent upon deceiving others and does not refrain from committing another treachery and contends that the utterance of truth is a meritorious act, and possesses a spiritual reward also, and that it is in your interest to attain an elevated station in the Hereafter, you are advised to ask your self: Suppose if God Almighty accords you the real glory for your defeat in case you gracefully accept it, would you still desire to prevail? If you see that your self loves to dominate others in academic discussion for gaining publicity among the scholars for your knowledge and scholarship, and the discussion that you undertake is aimed at winning others' respect and honor, then know that the intellectual discourse, which is the highest form of worship and prayer, is transformed into the sinful act of riya', which, according to the narration of al-Kafi, will lead you to Sijjin, you are classed as a polytheist, and this act was performed with the motive of gaining respect in the eyes of the people.

This act of yours, according to a tradition, will cause more harm to your faith than the harm done by two wolves that attack a herd of sheep without a shepherd from both sides. Therefore, you who are a scholar and responsible for reforming the Ummah and paving the way to the Hereafter, and curing spiritual infirmities, it is necessary for you first to correct yourself and maintain a sound spiritual state, so that you do not fall under

.the category of the scholars who do not act upon what they profess

Pray to God Almighty to purify our hearts of the stains of polytheism and hypocrisy, and cleanse the mirror of our hearts of the rust of the love of the world, which is the source of all vices. O God! kindly help us and protect us helpless beings, afflicted with the disease of vanity and the lust for power and honor, and guard us in this hazardous journey along the intricacies of the labyrinthine dark path, O the Mightiest and the .Most Powerful

Riya' In Congregational Prayers

Congregational prayer is an eminent form of Islamic worship, and the leader of this prayer holds a distinctive position of honor. For this reason, Satan also intrudes more in this worship. He is much more envious of the imam (leader) of the jama'ah (congregation) than anybody else. He is always busy finding the ways of keeping away the believers from receiving this Divine honor, and deprives their action of the .element of sincerity and truth and drives them to Sijjin

He tries to convert them into polytheists, and for this purpose he invades the hearts of the imams through various means, such as 'ujb (self admiration), which we shall discuss later on, and riya', which is a display of religiosity through this significant worship for impressing the people, gaining publicity, and earning their admiration and respect; for instance, when an imam sees that a certain pious person is attending the congregational prayer, he tries to make

an ostentation of his humility and devotion in order to capture his attention and win his admiration; he tries to find various ways of mentioning him in the gatherings of ‘people not present in the congregation; in order to show his importance, he drags the name of that pious man again and again and tries to inform the people about his presence as a follower in the congregational prayer; thus, he tries to create a false impression of a close association with him, especially if he belongs to the business class, and expresses such a great love and friendship for him which he never .expressed even for a single moment for God or His favored servants

And if, God forbid, any of the aristocrats loses his way and comes to pray with the congregation, it is a bigger disaster. The Devil is not unmindful, of the leader of a small congregation either. He approaches him and makes him aware that he is so unmindful of worldly gains that he is content to spend his time in a small local mosque of a poor neighborhood. This feeling is also similar to the first, or even worse than that; as the vice of jealousy spreads its tentacles in the hearts of such people, who do not enjoy the bounties of this world; the Devil deprives them of the glories of the other world too, and they are condemned to suffer in both the worlds. At the same time, the Devil, does not

lose his grip on the collars of people like you and me, who have no access to the leadership of a congregation, and who lament the absence of proper means; he makes us doubt the utility of congregations of Muslims, and makes us scorn and flout .them

We may be led to look upon our failure to capture a congregation as otherworldly seclusion, and ourselves as free from love of station and honor. Then we become worse than both of the groups, we neither belong to the first category of people, who enjoy the good things of this life, nor do we belong to the second category, whose achievements are comparatively humbler; nor do we have any claim to the next world; nevertheless if we get an opportunity, we might prove to be more power-hungry, honor-thirsty, and greedy than either of the groups.

?How Does Riya' Infiltrate The Ranks Of The Congregation

The Satan is not content with dragging the leader of the congregation to the hell. His lust is not satiated with that. He infiltrates the ranks of the worshippers also. Since the first row is more esteemed than other rows, and its right wing superior to the left, he makes them his target more often than any other row. He attracts the pious towards the right part of the first row, and incites them to pose to be superior to others in the eyes of the people. The helpless fellow, unconscious of the Satan's whispering, tries to demonstrate his superiority through a sanctimonious glance or gesture, which displays

.his inner polytheism, which is enough for sending him to Sijjin

From here, the Satan then steals into other rows to allure other people on account of his awkward gestures and funny behavior a devotee becomes the target of jeer and sneer of others, who consider themselves to be free from all sort of faults. Sometimes it has been observed that a respectable person, especially a scholar of rare distinction and high intellectual caliber, is made to sit by the Devil in the last row, in order to make people realize that though his position is much higher, but since he does not care for worldly position and is free of self-esteem, he has come to sit in the last row. Some .people of this kind will never be seen sitting in the first row

The Satan is not satisfied with influencing the imam and his followers; he sometimes catches hold of one of the loners by the beard, persuading him to leave his house or shop, and by means of his allurements he launches him into a corner of the mosque over a prayer mat. For such a man, no imam is 'adil, or qualified to lead prayers. The .Satan makes him perform a prolonged prostration and ruku' and an extended prayer

In his heart of hearts, this individual wishes to make people believe that he is pious and conscientious to such a degree that he avoids the congregation, so that he may not be trapped into following an unjust

imam. This person, besides being conceited and sanctimonious, is also ignorant of the laws of the Shari'ah. The marji' taqlid (legal authority) whom he follows may not have laid any condition for praying behind an imam except acceptability of his outward behavior. But the loner is not concerned with that, for his real motive is riya'. He merely wants to present himself as a man of piety in order to gain the favor and .admiration of people

In the same way, our other activities also are interfered with by the Satan. This damned creature, whenever he finds a murky heart, he makes it his resting place and tries to spoil our visible and invisible deeds, and transforms our good deeds into such .as lead us directly to the hell

An Invitation To Sincerity

My friend, be judicious and careful in your actions. Demand from yourself an account of every deed. Cross-examine yourself for every detail; try to evaluate your deeds through introspection whether they were meant for the realization of virtue or motivated otherwise. What motivated you to ask questions about mid-night prayers? Was it purely for the sake of God with an intention to perform such prayers, or for ?projecting your image as a deeply religiously person

Why is it that you are eager to inform others about your pilgrimage by all possible means and about the number of times you undertook it? Why are you not content with confining your charitable deeds to yourself alone, and what do you want to gain by informing

the others of your acts of charity, for as soon as you find an opportunity you announce them? If it is undertaken for the sake of God, and you intend that people should imitate you, and you think in terms of الدَّالُّ عَلَى الخَيْرِ كَفَاعِلِهِ. (the one who shows the path of virtue is as worthy as-the doer of it) while performing this deed, its display is justified; thank God, for He has enabled you to act with a clear conscience and pure heart. But beware of the guiles of Satan while interrogating your self, for he can project the acts adulterated with riya' as selfless and sacred.

If your action is not for the sake of God, then it is better to abstain from doing what you have been doing, for it amounts to sum'ah, i.e. advertisement of false virtues, which is a branch of the accursed tree of riya'; for God Almighty does not approve of it and condemns its perpetrator to Sijjin. We ought to seek refuge in God from the vice of deceit, whose guiles are very subtle. We have a general idea that our deeds are not pure and sincere, because had we been His true servants, why does the Devil, despite promising not to impede the actions of His true servants, disturb our sanctity and make us an instrument of his evil designs?

In the words of my respected teacher, the Devil is the watchdog of the Almighty's court; he does not bark at

the person who is near to God, and does not bother him. As the watchdog does not drive the friends of the master away from the house, in the same way, the Satan also recognizes God's friends, and does not allow any stranger to get access to Him. Therefore, whenever you realize that the Satan interferes in your affairs, you should immediately know that your actions are not performed with sincere intentions and are not meant for the Almighty. If you are a sincere believer in God, why doesn't your ?tongue pour forth words of wisdom, coming from the heart

For about forty years you imagine that you have been performing virtuous deeds in order to please God, whereas it occurs in a hadith that whosoever remains faithful to God for forty days, springs of wisdom emanate from his heart. This is, therefore, a sign for us to comprehend that our deeds were not performed for the sake of God, though we ourselves are not conscious of it, and this is the main cause of our .irremediable sickness

Pitiable is the condition of the devotees, worshippers, leaders and followers of Friday congregations and men of high knowledge and learning! When they will open their eyes in the court of the Most High on the Day of Judgment, they will come to know that they are not only among the sinners, perpetrators of major sins, but even worse .than infidels and idolaters, and their record of deeds even darker than theirs

It is

a matter of pity for a person that his prayers and other devotional acts should serve as fuel for the fires of hell. May God save us from the moment when, in spite of one's alms-giving and zakat and piety, one's appearance will be distorted to such hideousness that it is not even imaginable. You, a helpless creature, are branded as a mushrik, an idolater, and a sinner despite your belief in the Unity of God. God willing, He will forgive the sinners by His mercy, but for the mushrik He has said that He will .not forgive him if he dies without repentance

It is stated in the ahadith that one used to Riya'-the one who makes a display of his religiosity, devotion, high religious status, his preaching and leading of prayers, his fasting, his namaz and even his pious deeds for the sake of gaining respect in the hearts of people is a polytheist. His shirk (idolatry) is confirmed by the traditions of the Imams of the Holy Household (A) and the Quranic text, and hence his sin is unpardonable. It would have been better for you to be among the perpetrators of major sins, to be one notorious for his evil conduct and perpetration of obvious .indignities, while being a monotheist, instead of becoming a polytheist

Now, my friend, introspect seriously and find some remedy to cure your (spiritual) sickness, and realize the futility of acquiring honor in human hearts, a small piece of flesh which will not satisfy

a bird's appetite. These weak creatures possess no power, and their estimation is insignificant. The real power is to be sought in Him; He is the Absolute Cause of all causes-the Ultimate Cause. Even if all creatures make a joint effort to create a single mosquito, they will not be successful in doing so, and if the mosquito causes them a .slight harm they will not be able to avert it if God does not will so

All power belongs to the Almighty. He is the Mover of the universe. Whenever you do something and make an effort to perform something, inscribe on your heart with the :pen of reason

لا مُؤَثِّرَ فِی الوُجُودِ إلَا الله.

.No one is effective in the realm of existence except God

By all possible means equip your heart with the principle of unity of Divine Action (tawhid al-af'ali), which is the first stage of the belief in the Unity of Being, and thus convert it into the heart of a true believer. Illuminate your heart with the holy dictum there is no god but Allah; and mould it accordingly. Lead your heart to— (لا- إله إلا الله) :of the stage of tranquility (itminan), and make it realize that human beings can cause neither harm nor good, and that God alone is capable of doing any harm or good to anybody. Cure your vision, which suffers from blindness so that you are not raised :blind on the Day of Judgment and complain to the Almighty

(رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِی أَعْمَی

وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيراً.)

(My Lord! wherefore have You raised me (here) blind? (۲۰:۱۲۵

The Will of the Almighty prevails over the wills of other beings. If your heart surrenders to these holy words, and has faith in them, this can be hoped that your deeds will be rewarded and all the traces of polytheism, Riya', infidelity and hypocrisy will be wiped out from the face of your heart. This profound faith is in accordance with reason and revelation, and there are no traces of determinism (jabr) present in it. It is possible that some people who do not know the meaning, the basic principles and ingredients of determinism may mistake it as such, whereas it is not jabr but tawhid. Determinism is a kind of shirk; whereas tawhid is right guidance, determinism is misguidance. This occasion is not proper for discussing determinism and freedom. But .those who fully understand this issue can appreciate the import of what I say

Moreover, the Prophet (S) has asked us not to indulge in such discourses. Anyway, ask God Almighty, through supplication and humble entreaties all the time, especially in loneliness, to guide you and to illuminate your heart with the light of tawhid. Ask Him to endow you with the vision of the hidden, the perception of the unity (in diversity)-the Unity of Divine Being, so that you may not attach importance to anything else and consider every other thing as insignificant and trifle. Beseech His Holy Essence to ,make your actions pure and sincere

.and lead you to the path of sincerity and love

And if you have reached such a spiritual station that your prayers are responded and you can do something for this helpless creature of God, who has squandered his life in meaningless pursuits, devoid of any real purpose, hankering after desires and lusts, whose sins have sickened the heart to a point where no exhortation, advice, Quranic verse, or tradition of the Prophet (S), or argument or wise saying can have any effect, do pray for him; may be your prayer shall secure his deliverance. God never turns away a believer from His court, and He grants his prayers. By ever remembering these things, which you already know and which are also not new to you, be heedful and sincere from within the heart, and, without ceasing, critically reevaluate your .movements, pauses, and your behavior

Always scrutinize your secret intentions, and strictly take account of everything in the same manner as one business partner is accountable to the other. Abstain from everything that resembles riya' and simulation, however virtuous it may appear to be. Even in the matter of obligatory religious duties, if you believe that you cannot perform them sincerely in public, perform them secretly, though it is preferable to perform them openly. It is rare for riya' to occur in obligatory duties themselves; more often it relates to their mode of performance and to acts which are mustahabb or supererogatory. In any case, purge your heart from the

dirt of polytheism with perfect solemness and severest self-criticism, lest, God forbid, you should pass away from this world in this state that your performance is deplorable, and there is no hope of salvation for you. Then you will invite the wrath of God, as mentioned in the tradition quoted in Wasa'il al-Shi'ah from Qurb al- asnad, :(and reported from Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali (A

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيٍّ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، (أَنَّهُ قَالَ) مَنْ تَزَيَّنَ لِلنَّاسِ بِمَا يُحِبُّ اللهُ وَبَارَزَ اللهَ فِى السِّرِّ بِمَا يَكْرَهُهُ اللهُ لَقِىَ اللهَ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضْبَانَ وَلَهُ مَاقِتٌ.

Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali (A) reports that the Prophet (S) said, "One who does some act liked by God in order to show off to people, and in secret manifests such qualities as are abominations to God, he shall encounter God's anger and wrath on the Day of (Resurrection."(1)

There are two probable interpretations of this hadith. Firstly, it is about such a person who presents himself as paragon of virtue before people, while his inner self is immersed in ugly vices. Secondly, it may be about a person who performs outwardly virtuous deeds with the intention of Riya'. In any case, it is obvious that the hadith condemns riya', because the performance of the obligatory acts and duties if not motivated by riya', cannot be the object of Divine wrath. In all probability the second meaning is closer to the import of the hadith, as the open performance of wicked deeds is a greater

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah -۱

.evil

This is a warning for us to be cautious lest, God forbid, we do something to incur the :wrath of the King of kings and the Most Merciful of the merciful

أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ مِنْ غَضَبِ الحَلِيمِ.

(A Tradition Of Imam 'Ali (A

We conclude this section with a tradition reported from the commander of the pious, Amir al-mu'minin (A), recorded in al-Kafi. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq has also reported the same tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (A), which forms a part of the last will and :(testament of the Prophet (S) to 'Ali (A

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِیرُ المُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ : ثَلاثُ عَلامَاتٍ لِلْمُرَائِی: یَنْشِطُ إِذَا رَأَی النَّاسَ، وَیَکْسِلُ إِذَا کَانَ وَحْدَهُ، وَیُحِبُّ أَنْ یُحْمَدَ فِی جَمِیعِ أُمُورِهِ.

Said Imam al-Sadiq (A) that Amir al-mu'minin (A) said: 'There are three distinguishing features of one accustomed to riya': he expresses joy and cheerfulness when he is greeted by people; he becomes cheerless and sullen when alone; and he wishes to be (praised for everything he does.'(۱

Since this vice is so hidden and subtle that it remains unnoticed by the person himself, he is unaware of the fact that inwardly he is a hypocrite, and he imagines his actions to be pure and untainted. Therefore, the signs of this characteristic have been described so that men should be able to identify their hidden motives by examining .their inner self in their light and be able to prevent and treat them accordingly

An individual may introspect and know that he is not inclined to perform his religious duties when he

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۹۵ -۱

is alone; even if with great compulsion he forces himself to perform them, or even if he performs them habitually, he does not perform with real sincerity and purity of heart, but rather as a physical exercise; but while performing his prayer in the mosque, in the congregation of the people and in the presence of others, he becomes animated, performing his prayer with utmost joy and enthusiasm. He is inclined to perform long and protracted ruku's and prostrations; he performs the mustahabb actions properly, caring about their minutest particulars. If one pays a little attention to one's inner state, one may come to know the reason for this vigor. Why is it so that ?he spreads the net of his (pretended) piety for catching the attention of people

He may mislead himself by saying that he is more pleased with praying in the mosque, as it is more meritorious to do so, and that it brings more rewards also. He will convince himself by saying that it is preferable to say prayer in a better way in front of others, in order that they may follow his example and be attracted towards the religion. Man deceives himself by all means and never thinks of correcting himself. For a sick person who considers himself to be sound there is no hope of being cured. The ill-fated man's innermost being not only secretly aims to parade his good deeds before people, remaining unconscious of its inner urge, but is also bent

upon presenting his sin as worship and his conceit as propagation of religion, despite .the fact that the performance of the mustahabbat prayers is mustahabb in seclusion

Why is it that your self always responds in public, and why do you relish weeping out of the fear of God in the gathering of people, though in loneliness in spite of squeezing your eyes you cannot bring out a single tear? Where is the fear of God? Does it grip you in the gatherings of people only? Does it overwhelm you only on the occasion of in front of several thousands of people? Such a man (ليله القدر) the Nights of Great Value offers one hundred rak'ah's of namaz and recites the Du'a-i Jawshan-i Kabir and Du'a-i Jawshan-i Saghir in addition to several surahs of the Quran and is not bored and does not feel the slightest weariness. If man performs something purely for the sake of God or for gaining His blessings, or out of fear of hell or in the hope of heaven, ?why should he desire that his deeds be praised by men and admired by them

His ears are all the time eager to listen something in his praise, and his heart is after those who observe his devotion and notice how venerable this gentleman is, for he is so punctual about the prayer and is so concerned about the supererogatory duties. If your deeds are meant for God, what does this exaggerated craving mean? If the

fear of hell and the hope of heaven force you to perform these deeds, what does this love of publicity mean? You ought to realize that this desire issues from the accursed and abominable tree of riya'. Therefore, try as much as you can to purify yourself of .these absurd inclinations (to the extent possible), and try to reform yourself

Variation In Grades And Degrees Of Qualities Among Different Individuals

At this stage it is essential to remind you that each one of the qualities of the soul, both the good ones and the bad, has numerous grades and degrees. Those who acquire virtues and give up vices are grouped with the urafa, saints and friends of God (awliya' Allah.) As for other individuals, the nature of vices and virtues is determined by the spiritual station to which they belong. It may be that the qualities, which are considered to be vices for those belonging to higher spiritual station, are not considered vices for those belonging to a lower stage. On the contrary, in a way, they may even be regarded as their accomplishments. And similarly the qualities that are regarded as virtues for the people of a lower category may be vices for men of a .higher category

Riya' is also one of such (relative) vices that we are discussing presently. Authenticity (ikhlas) is the highest stage of freedom from riya' and is characteristic of the saints (awliya' Allah); others do not share this quality. The common people generally attain a lower stage of it, and this does not harm

their iman or ikhlas, because, generally, they have a natural inclination that their virtues be known to others. Though they may not have intentionally performed them for the sake of demonstrating them, but their self is instinctively inclined to make them known. This tendency does not annul their action, nor does it make them infidels, hypocrites (munafiqun) or polytheists either. But the same trait is considered to be a shortcoming in the case of a wali or 'arif bi-Allah, as for them it amounts to .nifaq or shirk

Absolute purification from the impurity of polytheism and obtaining perfect authenticity (ikhlas) of devotion is essentially a primary, condition for attaining the stage reserved for awliya' Allah, and there are even higher stages which they can attain, but, here, it would be out of place to go into these details. Our Imams (A) have declared that their worship was the worship of emancipated souls (ahrar), which was performed for the sake of love of God alone, neither due to the fear of hell nor in the hope of heaven; and they considered this stage to be the first step of their wilayah. To them worship is a state of ecstasy and rapture which is beyond the reach of our imagination and understanding. Apart from the above-mentioned ahadith narrated from the Prophet (S) and Amir al-mu'minin (A), there is another hadith also, reported :by Zurarah from imam Abu Ja'far (A), which is as follows

عَنْ زُرَارَةَ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ؛ قَالَ (زُرَارَةُ): سَأَلْتُهُ

عَنِ الرَّجُلِ يَعْمَلُ الشَّيْءَ مِنَ الخَيْرِ فَيَرَاهُ إِنْسَانٌ فَيَسُرُّهُ ذَلِكَ. قَالَ: لا بَأْسَ! مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلا وَيُحِبُّ أَنْ يَظْهَرَ لَهُ فِي النَّاسِ الخَيْرُ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ صَنَعَ ذَلِكَ لِذَلِكَ.

Zurarah reports that he questioned Imam al-Baqir (A) about the status of a person who performed good deeds, which were seen by others and it made him happy. Said the Imam (A): There is no harm in it; there is no one who does not like that his good deeds be made known to the people, in case he does not perform them [solely] for the sake of attracting their admiration.(١)

In one of the two ahadith, the tendency of performing good deeds for the sake of earning respect and admiration is considered as the sign of riya', while in another hadith it is stated that there is no harm in the joy resulting from the demonstration of a good deed. These two different positions are taken in view of the category to which an individual belongs. There are certain other reasons also for such a view, but we shall abstain from mentioning them.

What Is Sum'ah?

At the end, it is to be noted that sum'ah means to orally transmit one's good qualities to the ears of people for the purpose of attracting them and publicizing oneself, and this tendency is a branch of the vicious tree of riya'. For the same reason we have dealt with sum'ah as a part of riya', not as a distinct vice, and have not elaborated its meaning separately.

١- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ٢, p. ٢٩٧.

(Third Hadith: Self–Conceit ('Ujb

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بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَسْبَاطٍ، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ عُمَرَ الحَلّالِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِى الحَسَنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنِ العُجْبِ الَّذِى يُفْسِدُ العَمَلَ، فَقَالَ: العُجْبُ دَرَجَاتٌ؛ مِنْهَا أَنْ يُزَيَّنَ لِلعَبْدِ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَيَرَاهُ حَسَناً فَيُعْجِبُهُ وَيَحْسَبُ أَنَّهُ يُحْسِنُ صُنْعاً. وَمِنْهَا أَنْ يُؤْمِنَ العَبْدُ بِرَبِّهِ فَيَمُنُّ عَلَى اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَاللهُ عَلَيْهِ فِيهِ المَنُّ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from 'Ali ibn Asbat, from Ahmad ibn 'Umar al-Hallal, from 'Ali ibn Suwayd from Abu al-Hasan (Imam al-Rida [A]): Says 'Ali ibn Suwayd that he asked Abu al-Hasan (A) about the 'Ujb (self-conceit, vanity) that vitiates the quality of human deeds. Said the Imam (A): There are several levels of 'ujb, one of them is when one's bad qualities appear to him as good; he reckons them as good ones and congratulates himself imagining that he is performing virtues. Another level of 'ujb is represented by a person who believes in God and thinks that he has done a favor to God; whereas God Almighty has conferred (a favor on him (by endowing him with faith).(١)

?What Is 'Ujb

In the opinion of the ulama (R)(٢)'ujb is magnification of one's virtues and good deeds, their overestimation, and satisfaction with them accompanied with a feeling of superiority on their account, while one exonerates and exculpates himself from all failings and faults. But to feel pleasure and delight on performing virtuous deeds accompanied with a sense of humility

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١- Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p. ٣١٣.

٢- For maintaining readability, (R) which is an acronym for "Radhiya allahu anhu(m)" is used throughout the book to denote "May God have mercy upon him/them".

and modesty before God and gratitude to God for His favors, and to ask Him to increase them, is not ‘ujb, but is a praiseworthy (mamduh) trait. The great compiler of hadith, al-Allamah al-Majlisi, may his grave be filled with fragrance, quotes the great scholar and thinker al-Shaykh Baha’ al-Din al-Amili (R) as having said,

There is no doubt that when anyone performs good deeds, like fasting, night vigils, etc., he feels some kind of joy and pleasure within him. This pleasure and joy, if it is on account of the feeling that God Almighty has conferred on him favor and grace, which caused him to perform such acts of piety, while he is afraid of their loss and is anxious about their disappearance, and asks God Almighty for their continuity and abundance-this kind of exultation and gladness is not ‘ujb.

But if the exultation and pride is felt on account of the belief that he is the doer of such deeds and that it is he who possesses all such good qualities, and if he glorifies his own deeds with confidence in his goodness, considering himself to be free from all faults and vices, it reaches such a point that one believes that he is conferring some favor upon God in performing these deeds. This feeling of exultation and pride is ‘ujb.

In my opinion, this definition of ‘ujb is correct, but the deeds and actions referred to should be considered to include the external as well as the internal acts,

and at the same time to apply both to good and bad actions. Because, while affecting the bodily or external actions ‘ujb also affects one’s inner (mental and spiritual) actions also and corrupts them. In the same way as a virtuous person may become conceited and vain about his good deeds, so also the doer of wicked deeds may think highly of his qualities, and feel proud of himself on their account. The tradition explicitly mentions both of them, as they are frequently ignored by a majority of men. .We shall discuss them in the course of our discourse

This should also be remembered that the delight which is considered to be different from ‘ujb and is reckoned among praiseworthy qualities, is according to its specific .nature, as will be explained in the subsequent discussion

Ujb has various degrees, as is also indicated by the hadith; the following are some of‘ :them

First Degree: ‘Ujb with regard to faith and belief in true doctrines; its opposite is the .‘ujb in kufr (infidelity), shirk (polytheism), and fallacious creeds

Second Degree: The ‘ujb in good traits and qualities, as opposed to the ‘ujb in moral .vices and ugly qualities

Third Degree: The ‘ujb in pious deeds and good actions, as opposed to the ‘ujb in .abominable deeds and repulsive acts

There are certain other degrees also, but they are not so significant as to be put in a separate class; we shall, by the help of the Almighty, discuss these three degrees of ‘ujb, their causes, the ways

.of their remedy and cure

Ujb Of The Faithful‘

Among the above-mentioned states of ‘ujb, some of them can be clearly detected if one tries to discover them and pays a little attention and is vigilant; but some others, being very subtle and concealed, cannot be detected unless one is carefully critical of oneself and minutely analyzes one's deeds and actions. Certain stages are more .dangerous and fatal than the other stages

The first and foremost stage which is the extreme and most fatal kind of ‘ujb is a state in which the person believes to have conferred a favor on his Supreme Benefactor, the King of kings, by having faith in Him, or by performing the duties enjoined by Him. He imagines that through his belief he has caused the boundaries of the kingdom of Heaven to expand, or he has contributed to the splendor and magnificence of the Religion of Truth by having faith in Him. He thinks that by propagating and disseminating His message, preaching His Shari'ah, His laws or His doctrine, or by enjoining good behavior and forbidding evil conduct or by implementing the hudud prescribed by Him, or by his sermons from the pulpit or his prayers in the niche, he is .imparting a certain splendor and glory to His religion

Or he also may think that by joining the congregation of Muslims, or by holding the mourning ceremonies to commemorate the tragedy of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom, he is glorifying the religion and hence doing a favor to God, to the

Martyred Imam (A), and to the Prophet (S). Though he would not reveal it openly, but in his heart of hearts he may think in this manner. In the same way, while serving the creatures of God in matters prescribed or recommended by the religion-like giving of obligatory and recommended alms, helping and protecting the weak and the destitute-he thinks that he is putting them under obligation. Sometimes this feeling of doing a favor to them is so concealed that it is not known to the person himself (the subject of doing of favor to God by men and doing of favor to men by God has been discussed in detail in the second hadith).

At the second level is the state in which an individual is exultant in his heart taking a coquettish air before God. This attitude is different from the one of conferring a favor on God, though many people see no difference between these two states. In this state the individual considers himself as a favorite of God, and includes himself in the clan of the saintly and among those nearest to God. If he hears the names of saintly persons, of those near to God or those captivated by Divine love, he associates himself with them in his heart, although, overtly he makes a simulation of humility and tries to project an opposite image of himself.

In order to make credible his assumed role, he may act against his real belief in such a way, which appears

to negate it, but in fact posits it by its very negation. If any misfortune comes to him, of (lit. ‘misfortune in exchange for friendship’, which (البَلاءُ لِلوَلاءِ) he blows trumpet implies that the saintly are beset in hardships). Those people who claim being guides of others, urafa, mystics, and ascetics are susceptible to its dangers more than other .people

In the next state, the individual considers himself worthy of being rewarded by God Almighty in return for his faith, good behavior, and good deeds, and considers it obligatory on God to befriend him in this world and grant him higher stations in the Hereafter. He counts himself among the true believers and considers himself to be a pure, innocent, and pious being. Whenever a pious person is praised in his absence, he believes that even if God where to adjudge him with justice, he also would deserve to be rewarded. And sometimes, with utter shamelessness and brazenness, he dares .to speak in such terms emphatically

If a misfortune befalls him, or he faces any adversities, he complains about the ways of God in his heart and questions the justness of His actions that causes sufferings for the pious, the sincere, and the truthful, and showers His kindness and generosity upon the hypocrites (munafiq’un). He nurses the sentiments of resentment against God inside his heart, while apparently expressing the sense of gratification and satisfaction. He shifts the responsibility of his misfortunes to the Supreme Benefactor, and pretends to be happy

and contented with His will and Judgment outwardly. And when he hears that God smites the believers in this world, he consoles his heart without knowing the fact that the munafiq'un are also smitten, and that every individual who is smitten is not a .believer

In the other stage of 'ujb the individual considers himself as superior to others, and regards himself as better than other human beings. He considers himself to be more pious than others and considers his own faith to be sounder than that of other believers and immaculate. He considers himself to be more perfect and unfailing than others in the observance of the wajibat (compulsory duties) and the 'muhrramat (prohibited things). He thinks himself to be more regular than others in the observance of mustahabbat (recommended religious precepts) and more regular in .joining the Friday prayer congregation and other ceremonies and rites

He considers himself to be superior to others and treats others as imperfect and insignificant beings. He views them disdainfully in his heart, or treats them with contempt. He excludes every individual from Divine grace and mercy, and considers them a right belonging to himself or to some people like him. The person who has reached this stage comes to a point when he denies whatever virtue he perceives in others and is disposed to regard its presence in others as disputable. Somehow he suspects the sincerity of their virtues in his heart and considers his own deeds as free from any kind of

fault. He underrates others' good deeds, but if he himself performs those deeds he .magnifies them. He is sensitive to others' errors, but overlooks his own faults

These are some of the signs and symptoms of ‘ujb though one may be unaware of their presence in oneself. There are certain other stages of ‘ujb also which I did not .mention, and there might be some others of which I am, unavoidably, unaware

The ‘Ujb Of The Faithless

The bad deeds of unbelievers, hypocrites, polytheists, atheists, villains, sinners, and transgressors occasionally reach such a point when they become proud of their evil deeds and think highly of themselves. They, on account of their vicious beliefs and deeds, consider themselves to be men of liberal thinking and open minds, free from all fetters and bonds and free from superstitions. They consider themselves as men of courage and valor, link the faith and belief in God with superstition, and consider the observance of religious precepts as a kind of narrow-mindedness. They consider good character and moral behavior as signs of weakness of the personality. They look down on the performance of good deeds and observance of religious duties and rites .as the signs of a weak mind and evidence of the lack of common sense

They regard themselves as free-men, who, for not believing in nonsensical superstitions and indifference to religious rules, are worthy of praise. Wicked and vicious qualities having sunk down their roots within the deep layers of their hearts, and their eyes and ears having become accustomed

to those acts, and they having gained great charm and grace in their eyes, they consider them as accomplishments. As pointed out in the hadith, at one stage bad deeds appear to be good to the evil person and he perceives them as virtues. This is :all allusion to the verse of the Quran, which says

(أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا.)

And what of him, the evil of whose deeds has been decked out fair to him, so that he (thinks then good?... (۳۵:۸

and he considers that he is doing something good')' (وَيَحْسَبُ أَنَّهُ يُحْسِنُ صُنْعاً) The words :refer to the following verse

(قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا. الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِی الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا. أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَهِ وَزْنًا.)

Say: Shall We inform you who will be the greatest losers in their works? Those whose striving goes astray in the life of the world, while they think that they are doing something good. Those are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and in the encounter with Him. Therefore their works have failed, and on the Day of (Resurrection We shall not assign to them any weight. (۱۸:۱۰۳-۵

Such people, who are ignorant and negligent but consider themselves to be learned and aware, are the most wretched of human beings, or rather the most wretched of creatures. Spiritual doctors are incapable of curing them. No admonition or advice can have any influence on them, but can even

produce opposite results. They do not listen to any argument. They do not pay any heed to the guidance of the prophets (A), the arguments of the philosophers, and the teachings of the great sages.

We should seek refuge in God from the mischief of the self, whose wiles draw men from sinfulness into infidelity and from infidelity into ‘ujb. The self and the Devil make people accustomed to a sin by diminishing the gravity of that sin. When that vice sends out its roots into the heart, it appears to be a very ordinary and trivial thing to the person, who commits another sin bigger than the one with which he has become familiar.

After committing this second sin repeatedly, it also casts away its gravity in his view and appears to be an ordinary thing, and he does not hesitate to commit a still bigger sin. In this way, step by step, all major sins become diminutive in his eyes, and the Divine laws of the Shari’ah, belittled by him, recede into insignificance. His evil deeds culminate in infidelity, apostasy, and ‘ujb. We shall take up this subject later on.

Snares And Wiles Of The Devil

In the same way as the victims of ‘ujb (who think highly of themselves), by advancing step by step in transgression and sinfulness, ultimately reach the stage of apostasy, in the same way those affected by ‘ujb in their devotional activities and worship also advance day by day from the lower stages of ‘ujb to its higher levels. The

snares and designs of Satan and the self are not haphazard, but according to a calculated plan. It is not possible that the Devil would induce a God-fearing person of a clean character to commit a sin like murder or fornication, nor would he provoke a person possessing an honest nature and a pure soul to commit theft or a highway robbery. It is not the case that from the very first day he will ask you to consider your good deeds as a favor done to God or to include yourself in the category of the Divine .saints, His favorite servants, and those nearest to Him

In the beginning he starts at the bottom and in a low key. He steals into your heart and persuades you to be extremely careful and dedicated regarding the recommended duties (mustahabbat), prayers, and acts of piety. While you do this, he will turn your attention towards the sins of a certain sinner and will make you compare his deeds with your own. Then he will whisper into your ears that you have enough grounds, both on a rational as well as a religious basis, to consider yourself .superior to that person

Indeed your deeds will be the source of your redemption and that by the grace of God you are pious and pure and free from all vices. He achieves two things through these kind of insinuations: first, it inculcates a feeling of general distrusts regarding the creatures of God; second, it

makes the person imbued with a feeling of self-satisfied conceit. Both of these .qualities are destructive and the sources of various vices and evils

At this juncture, you should tell your self and the Devil that it is possible that this person who is guilty of committing that sin may possess other good qualities unknown to you or might have performed certain good deeds for which God may bless him with His grace and mercy, and the light of his good deeds and good qualities may guide him and ultimately lead him to deliverance. Perhaps God Almighty has afflicted him with this sin, so as to protect him from ‘ujb, which is worse than sin. It is said in a hadith of :al-Kafi

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَلِمَ أَنَّ الذَّنْبَ خَیْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنَ العُجْبِ، وَلَوْلا ذَلِکَ لَمَا ابْتُلِیَ مُؤْمِنٌ بِذَنْبٍ أَبَداً.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (A) said: Verily God Almighty knows that sin is better for a mu’min (a true believer) than ‘ujb. If it was not thus, He would not have afflicted any (mu’min with sin.(۱

Maybe on account of the same mistrust in others, my acts will lead me to a miserable life in the Hereafter. Our great master, the accomplished ‘arif, Shahabadi- r’uhi fidah- used to say, ‘Do not look down on even a kafir (non-believer) in your heart. It is possible that the divine light of his inner nature may lead him to faith and your rebuke and disdain may lead you towards a wretched life

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.Al-Kafi, vol. II, p. ۳۱۳ -۱

in the Hereafter. Of course to practice al amr bi al-ma'r-uf wa al-nahy 'an al-munhar (enjoining right conduct and forbidding bad behavior) is something different from the '.inner feeling of contempt

He would even say, 'Never curse the unbelievers regarding whom it is not known that they will leave the world in the state of unbelief. If they leave the world as rightly-guided servants of God, their spiritual rectitude may prove to be an obstruction in the way of your own spiritual advancement.' In any case, beware that the Devil and the carnal self make man enter the preliminary stages of 'ujb; and from this place, step by step, they slowly take him to higher stages of 'ujb, and in this way, in degrees, they lead man to the wretched state in which he thinks that he is conferring a favor on God .by having faith in Him and performing virtuous deeds. This is the final stage of 'ujb

The Evil Effects Of 'Ujb

Know that 'ujb in itself is a destructive and dangerous vice which spoils the faith and the deeds. In answer to the question by the narrator of the tradition about 'ujb which corrupts human deeds, the Imam (A) mentions the 'ujb in faith as one of its forms. We have read in the previous tradition that 'ujb is considered by God Almighty to be something worse than sin, so much so that He makes a believer commit sin so that he may be saved from 'ujb. The Holy Prophet (S) has reckoned

ujb as one of the greatest of spiritual dangers. In al-'Amali of Al-Shaykh al-Saduq,' :Imam 'Ali (A) has been reported to have said

مَنْ دَخَلَهُ العُجْبُ هَلَكَ.

.The one into whose heart 'ujb permeates is destined to be destroyed

After death and in the purgatory (barzakh), the possessor of this evil experiences a dreadful loneliness, which is incomparable and unimaginable; in an advice given by :the Prophet (S) before his death to Imam 'Ali (A). he says

وَلا وَحْدَهَ أَوْحَشُ مِنَ العُجْبِ.

.No loneliness can be compared in dreadfulness to the one, which is the result of 'ujb

Moses (A) asked Satan to tell him about the sin by means of which he infiltrates into the hearts of the progeny of Adam (A) and conquers them. Satan replied, it is the time when they feel 'ujb about themselves, overestimate their good deeds and the gravity .of their sins becomes diminutive in their eyes

God Almighty commanded David (A) to convey 'glad tiding to the sinners and to terrify the pious.' David (A) asked God as to why he should convey glad tiding to sinners and frighten the pious. Replied God Almighty, 'Give glad tidings to the sinners that verily I accept their repentance and forgive their sins, and frighten and warn the pious that they should refrain from 'ujb. Verily there is not a single man who does not stand '.condemned if I bring him to account

I seek refuge in God from the rigors of His reckoning, which if applied would completely ruin the sincere servants of

.God and even those belonging to a higher station

In his al-Khisal, al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said: The Devil says: If I subdue the son of Adam in three things I do not care for whatever he may do, as his good deeds will not be accepted: (١) when he overestimates his good .deeds, (٢) is forgetful about his sins, and (٣) when ‘ujb permeates him

Apart from the vices which belong to this vicious tree of ‘ujb, about which you have read, there are a number of major sins and evil traits that are its products. When its roots permeate the human heart, they lead men to apostasy and shirk, and things even worse than these. One of those vices is the vice of belittling of one’s sins. A person afflicted with ‘ujb never cares to rectify himself; rather, he considers. himself as a pious and virtuous person, and never thinks of purging himself from sins. The .curtain of ‘ujb and the thick veil of conceit prevents him from seeing his shortcomings

It is a great misfortune, which not only precludes him from achieving all kinds of perfections, but also afflicts him with all sorts of vices, leading him to eternal damnation. Even the doctors of the psyche are helpless in curing them. He has so much confidence in himself and in the deeds he performs that he thinks himself as ,independent of God Almighty, and does not care for His grace. In his limited mind

he considers God obliged to reward him. He imagines that he is worthy of being rewarded even if God were to reckon his deeds with justice. God willing, we shall take .up this matter again later

Contempt Of Others

Among other vices present in the person who is afflicted with ‘ujb is that of viewing others with contempt. He considers their deeds as insignificant, however superior they may be to his own. This is also one of the ways of human destruction, and a peril .on the path of true humanness

Temptation To Riya’

Another of the evil effects of ‘ujb is that man becomes inclined towards riya’ (ostentation, hypocrisy). Because, when a person considers his deeds insignificant and regards himself as morally imperfect and his faith as of no consequence, then, he .would not be proud of himself, or his qualities and deeds

Considering himself and everything that is done by him as deformed and unworthy, he will not make a display of them; soiled and ugly goods are not put up for show in a prestigious market. But, since, he perceives himself as a perfect human and his own deeds as good and worthy, he is encouraged to make a show of them, and hence behave so imprudently. The vices which have been mentioned in the second tradition .about riya’ are applicable to ‘ujb also

The Factor Of Pride

Another ill effect of this vice is that it manifests itself in the form of another fatal disease that is, the sin of pride (of which we shall have to say

more later) and other vices, which are direct or indirect products of it. A full treatment of all of them would make our discussion lengthy it is enough to mention it that a person afflicted with ‘ujb should know that this vice sows the seeds of many other vices and serves as the source of such offences, each one of which is enough for earning everlasting damnation by itself. If one tries to properly understand these vices, and studies the traditions and teachings handed down by the Prophet (S), or the Imams of his household (A), he will realize the necessity of rectifying his self, and will .seek to get rid of this vice before, God forbid, he carries it with him to the next world

If this happens, once his eyes are closed on this world and opened to world of barzakh and, thereafter, to the Day of Resurrection, he will see that the persons who committed major sins are better off than him. He will see that God Almighty has immersed them in the ocean of His grace and mercy ‘for the remorse and penitence that they expressed, or for the sake of the trust and confidence that they had in the grace and compassion of the Almighty; whereas this poor fellow, since he had considered himself as not in need of His grace and had believed himself, in the depth of his being, to be above needing His compassion and mercy, God Almighty has dealt with him

rigorously in regard to his account, and as he himself wished his account is being .examined in the scales of justice

God Almighty will show him that he not only did not perform any worship for His sake, but also that his works of devotion and piety only took him away from God and have removed him away from his goal. Not only his faith and deeds have been invalid, but they have also served as the cause of eternal damnation and painful chastisement in hell. God forbid, lest God Almighty judges anybody with the criteria of His justice, because, as mentioned previously, not a single individual, from the first to the last, will .find any way of redemption

The prayers and supplications of His chosen servants and the infallible Imams (A) are replete with the confessions of their failure to do justice to the demands of the worship and the service of Lord. While the most perfect of all creatures and the man :nearest to God (i.e. the Prophet [S]) utters

مَا عَرِفْناکَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِکَ وَلا عَبَدْنَاکَ حَقَّ عِبادَتِکَ.

We did not know You as You deserve to be known. We did not worship You as You .deserve to be worshipped

what will others do? Of course, they were aware of His greatness and they knew the relation between the contingent and the Necessary Being perfectly well. They knew that if they spent their lives in His worship, service, and praise, they would not be able ,to thank Him for His favors

.let alone paying the proper tribute due to His Essence and Attributes

They knew that no thing does possess anything of its own. Life, power, knowledge and other accomplishments are shadows of His attributes. Every contingent being is absolutely poor in every respect, a dependent shadow not an independent 'thing'. What merits does a contingent being possess that it could seek to market them? What power does it possess to make a display of it? They (the Prophet and the Imams) possess the knowledge of God; they have the cognition of His Attributes of .beauty and grandeur

They are the people who have realized, with certainty, their own abjectness, imperfection, and weakness and the perfection of the Necessary Being, through immediate knowledge. It is we, wretched creatures, whose vision is blotted because of the thick veils of ignorance, folly, neglect, and conceit, and whose faculties of intellect, hearing, sight, and other senses are shrouded with veils of inward and outward sins, who behave with pretensions in front of the Almighty and consider .ourselves as independent beings

O you, ephemeral, contingent being! You, who are forgetful of your own self and are oblivious of the relation between you and your Creator. O you unfortunate dependent being! You have forgotten your duty towards the King of kings! This ignorance and foolishness on our part is responsible for all our misfortunes and has engulfed us in the midst of all these woes and disasters. There is a source of all these evils. The source of

contamination is the fountain itself. We have lost our sense of perception and our hearts have become lifeless. This is the root cause, of all our afflictions, and yet we .are not worried about the cure either

God Almighty, grant us the capacity to realize our responsibilities. Grant us a share of the light of Your knowledge with which You filled the hearts of Your urafa and awliya' Grant us the comprehension of the realm of Thy power and Thy kingdom, and guide الحَمْدُ) us to discover our weaknesses and faults. Unfold the mystery of the meaning of All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds— to us, wretched— (للهِ رَبِّ العَـالَمِينَ beings, who ascribe all the praiseworthy attributes to the creatures. Make it known to us that none of the praiseworthy attributes belongs to any created being . Reveal to :us the truth of

(مَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ حَسَنَهٍ فَمِنْ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَیِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man), it is from Allah, and whatever or ill befalleth (thee it is from thyself. (۴: ۷۹

Inscribe the principle of tawhid (unity of the Divine Being) on the crude tablets of our hardened heart. We are the people of dark realms who languish behind several veils, wavering between apostasy and hypocrisy. We are conceited and egoistic. Purge away the evil of self- love and the love of mundane thins from our hearts and convert :us into Your lovers and worshippers

(إِنَّکَ عَلَی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِیرٌ.)

Verily, Thou art able to

.do all things

Self–Love As The Source Of 'Ujb

The vice of 'ujb is the product of self-love; since the human being is plagued with the evil of self-love, it is the source of all human faults and moral vices. It is on account of this self-love that man overvalues his trivial deeds and hence includes himself in the category of the saintly and the nearest to God. Because of it, he not only considers himself applaudable and commendable on the basis of those paltry deeds, but sometimes even reckons his wicked deeds as good ones. If he perceives moral goodness and piety in others more than himself, he not only never gives any .importance to them, but tries to project them in grim colors as far as possible

He is disposed to see a kind of goodness even in his own wicked deeds, and tends to paint them in glowing colors. He scorns other creatures of God in his heart and views them cynically, while he contemplated himself with optimism, having a-very high opinion of himself. It is on account of this same self-love that he hopes a trivial act of his, and that too tainted with one thousand defilements, to be worthy of being .rewarded by God

It is better if today we reflect upon our good deeds, and rationally evaluate our worships. We should try to judge them justly, and see whether we deserve to be rewarded and praised on their basis, or if we should be reproached, punished, and condemned because of them. And

if God Almighty were to deliver us into the flames of His wrath on account of these ?deeds, which are good and virtuous in our own view, is He justified or not in doing so

Now I make you arbiter to judge with justice the following matter after deliberation and profound thinking. My question is that if the Holy Prophet (S), whose truthfulness is confirmed, were to say to you, 'It makes no difference in afterlife whether you worship God throughout your life, obey His commands, and resist lusts and carnal desires, or if you lead a life violating His commands and following your wishes and sensual desires. This behavior of yours will not affect your station in the Hereafter. In both cases you will attain salvation and will be sent to Paradise and saved from His .chastisement

It will not make any difference whether you offer prayers or whether you indulge in fornication and sin. However, the good pleasure of God Almighty lies in this that you should worship Him, praise Him and thank Him, and resist your sensual desires in this world, although you will not be rewarded for it.' Were you offered this option, would ?you choose to be His worshipper or a sinner

Would you resist your carnal desires and forbid yourself from indulging in lusts for the sake of His good pleasure, or not? And would you still adhere to the mustahabbat, the Friday and the congregational prayer, or would you become immersed in luxuries, ,play

amusements, and lusts? I request you to answer justly, without any self-assumption and hypocrisy. As to myself and others like me, let me tell you, we would have been among the sinners, neglecting our duties towards Him and hankering after our .sensual appetites

From this, we come to the conclusion that all our deeds serve as the means for satisfying our desires and gratifying the carnal appetites. We are the worshippers of our flesh. We give up one pleasure for the sake of a bigger one. Our desired goal, our relentless hope is to widen the scope of sensual achievements. Salat, which is a means of acquiring nearness to Him, we perform in the hope of the company of the houris of Paradise. Our worship is not aimed at acquiring nearness to the Almighty. It has nothing to do with the obedience of His command either, and is thousands of .miles away from the good pleasure of God

You, poor fellow, ignorant of the Divine teachings, you who cannot comprehend anything except your own bestial motives, you who take pride in your resorting to His remembrance, chanting of His Name, observance of the obligatory and recommended religious duties, avoidance of prohibited and abominable things, you who take recourse in refined morals and abstain from the unlawful and the abominable, put in the scales of justice all the acts that you have performed for obtaining sensual ends, and for the purpose of reclining on seats studded with rubies in the Paradise, in the

midst of cheerful and charming rewards of Paradise, wearing silk and brocade, and occupying magnificent mansions therein and for realizing your hopes -is it just to think that all these actions, which are performed for the sake of satisfying our ego and the fulfillment of the self, are being performed for the sake of God and for His adulation alone? You, who are performing your deeds in the hope of receiving fair rewards, are you different in any respect from a laborer who toils for wages but says that he works solely for the master? Are you not a liar when you say that you perform prayers for ?the sake of God

Is your salat meant for the sake of acquiring nearness to God, or for the sake of the company of the houris of Paradise and for sensual ends? Let me state openly without any reservations that all such prayers that we perform are considered by urafa and the friends of God as equivalent to major sins. You, wretched creature, you act against the good pleasure of God Almighty in the presence of the archangels, and the worships that are meant for making an ascension near to Him, you are misusing them for satisfying your carnal self; yet you do not feel any sense of shame for the lies .uttered in front of the Almighty and His archangels during your prayers

And as if this were not enough, you made several accusations, thinking as if you were obliging God, exulting

in your ‘ujb, and not feeling any sense of shame or regret while doing all this! What is the difference between this kind of worship performed by you and me, and the sinful ?’acts of the sinners, the extreme form of which is riya

Riya’ is a kind of shirk, and its ugliness and gravity lies in worship being not for the sake of God, not meant for God. All our worships and devotional exercises are sheer shirk, which does not contain a speck of sincerity. The aim of earning the good pleasure of God does not play even a partial role in it, but the only motive is .gratification of lust and service of the stomach

My friend, beware that the prayer performed for the sake of a feminine mate, whether this-worldly or other-worldly, is not the prayer performed for God. The prayer, which is performed for the attainment of worldly benefits or for acquiring the other-worldly rewards is not for God. If so, where is the room for self-pride and conceit? What right do you have for looking down upon the creatures of God and for counting yourself as someone of consequence in the court of the Almighty? Wretched man, you deserve punishment for this prayer and devotion of yours and for it you deserve to be chained by the seventy cubit chain. Why consider yourself as a person ?deserving a reward then

Why procure another chastisement for yourself by continuing in this absurd ?expectation and by persisting in ‘ujb

Perform the duties assigned to you properly and keep in your mind that your worship is not purely for the sake of God; and if God Almighty sends you to heaven by His mercy and compassion, remember that He has given a waiver to His servants for a certain kind of shirk in view of their infirmity. By means of His forgiving compassion, .He covers their sins with a concealing screen

Do not let this screen to be ripped off and the curtain of His remission to be raised from the face of those vices, which we wrongfully call, worship. God forbid, if that waiver were withdrawn and our deeds are adjudged according to the standards of justice, remember this that our false worships are not less fouler than the mortal sins of the sinners. Earlier we referred to a tradition narrated by Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni, in his book al-Kafi, on the authority of Imam al Sadiq (A); here I am copying a :(part of it verbatim in order to draw upon its blessing (barakah

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِدَاوُدَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: یَا دَاوُدُ بَشِّرِ الْمُذْنِبِینَ وَأَنْذِرِ الصِّدِّیقِینَ. قَالَ: کَیْفَ أُبَشِّرُ الْمُذْنِبِینَ وَأُنْذِرُ الصِّدِّیقِینَ؟ قَالَ: یَا دَاوُدُ بَشِّرِ الْمُذْنِبِینَ بِأَنِّی أَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَهَ وَأَعْفُو عَنِ الذَّنْبِ، وَأَنْذِرِ الصِّدِّیقِینَ أَنْ لا یُعْجَبُوا بِأَعْمَالِهِمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَیسَ عَبْدٌ یَتَعَجَّبُ بِالحَسَنَاتِ إلا هَلَکَ.

Imam Ja’far al Sadiq (A) reports from the Prophet (S) that he said: God Almighty-said to David (A), “O David give

good news unto the sinners and warn the righteous." Said David (A), "How should I give good news unto the sinners and warn the righteous?" Said the Almighty, "O David, give good news to -the sinners that I accept their repentance, and warn the righteous that they should not have 'ujb (self admiration) for their acts, for there is no servant who does not stand doomed when I take an account of his deeds (and deserve chastisement, since, according to the requirements of justice, a man with all .(his worship cannot thank God properly even for one of His favors

While the righteous, who are free from sins, deserve to be condemned after a fair trial, what will be the fate of people like you and me? And that too if our deeds be pure and free from worldly riya'; a verboten quality, of which there is very little chance. Now be proud if there is an occasion for being proud and feeling 'ujb; but if you realize that it is an occasion for being ashamed and hanging the head in shame and making confession of our sin after every worship, then repent before the Almighty for uttering those solemn lies, and for falsely assigning those virtues to ourselves. Does it not call for repentance when you make this declaration in front of God. While standing for :prayer

(وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِی لِلَّذِی فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِیفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنْ الْمُشْرِکِینَ. إِنَّ صَلَاتِی وَنُسُکِی وَمَحْیَای وَمَمَاتِی لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِینَ.)

,I have turned my face

in sincerity and submission, towards Him who created the heavens and earth, and I am not of the mushrikun (those who include others while worshipping God, i.e., polytheists). Verily, my prayer and my worship, my living and my dying, are for Allah, .the Lord of the Worlds

Is your face really turned towards the Creator of the heaven and earth? Are you really a 'Muslim' and free from the dirt of shirk? Is your prayer and worship, your living and dying really for God? Shouldn't we feel some shame while uttering; this sentence in :our prayer

(الحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ.)

.All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds

Do you sincerely consider all laudable qualities to be derived from God, while you pay tribute not only to His creatures but also to His enemies? Is it not a lie to apparently admit that God is رَبُّ العَالَمِينَ (The Lord of the Worlds), while practically you subscribe to ?the authority and lordship of the other-than-God

:Is there any inkling of shame and repentance in your heart, while you utter

(إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ.)

?Thee alone we worship; Thee alone we ask for help

Do you truly worship God, or worship your own flesh? Do you actually seek God, or aspire for the houris? Do you seek help from God alone? In your deeds, do you consider God alone? When you go to perform Hajj of the Bayt Allah (the Holy Ka'bah) is God the only goal and end? And is the Master of the House your only

:pursuit, as the poet says

وَمَا حُبُّ الدِّيَارِ شَغَفْنَ قَلْبِی وَلَکِنْ حُبُّ مَنْ سَکَنَ الدِّیَارا

,It is not the dwelling that attracts my heart

.But he who dwells in it draws my heart

Are you in search of God, and desire for His beatific vision? Do you hold the majalis (mourning ceremonies for Imam al-Husayn [A]) and beat your head and breast for his sake, or for the sake of the fulfillment of your wishes and desires? Is it not your selfish desires, which motivate you to hold majalis, to join congregational prayers, and to ?perform devotional rituals

My brother, be cautious regarding the guiles of the self and Satan, who do not want your pieties to be taintless, and if they might be accepted by God by His grace, despite their taint, the Devil and the carnal self do not desire them to reach their final destination. Through misplaced 'ujb and improper pride they bring all your deeds to nothing, and the little benefit that you aimed at is also not obtained. Having lost His .good pleasure, even the hopes of houris will come to nothing

Now having lost everything eternal damnation in the flames of hell does not seem distant. By means of your faulty, rotten actions tainted with riya', sum'ah, and a thousand other vices, each one of which is enough for preventing our deeds from being accepted, you imagined to have done God a favor, having become His beloved servant. Poor fellow, you, who cannot comprehend the state of His beloved

servants and the fire that is kindled in their hearts, you unlucky wretch with your little knowledge of their heartfelt sincerity and the bright radiance emanating from their ?glorious deeds, do you think that their deeds are similar to yours and mine

Do you think that the salat of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (A) differed from ours only in the in the correct pronunciation of some words, or in the (وَلا ـ الضَّالِّيـنَ) manner of uttering prolongation of prostrations and profusion of raka'at, prayers, and supplication? Do you imagine that my prayer differs from his only in the number of rak'ah's-a few hundred every night? Are the prayers and the supplications of Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin (A) (the Fourth Imam) are similar to the mutterings of yours and mine? Do you think he moaned and sobbed for the sake of houris or pomegranates or pears of Paradise ?like us

I swear by him-and indeed it is a great oath-that even if all of us come together and There is no god except God— in the manner of Amir al-— (لا ـ إِلَهَ إِلا ـ اللهُ) try to say one Mu'minin (A), we will not be able to do so. Dust be upon my head, I and my little knowledge of the high station of Imam 'Ali (A)! I swear by the station of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) that even if all the archangels and all the prophets of God, except the Seal of the Prophets (S), who is the lord of 'Ali (A) and all

others, if they try to utter a single takbir (i.e. Allahu Akbar, ‘God is very great’) of ‘Ali’s, they will not be able to do it. The inner state of their hearts is known only to themselves and is unknown to others.

My friend! do not babble so much about God. Do not exaggerate your love for God. O ‘arif! O Sufi! O philosopher! O mujahid! O ascetic! O faqih! O believer! O sage! you poor ensnared wretches! You unfortunate creatures entangled in the snares of the self and its desires! You helpless creatures bewildered in the perplexities of false hopes, aspirations and self-love! You, who are all wretched, being thousands of miles removed from true godliness and love of God. Do not have such a good opinion of yourselves. Do not be so boastful and proud of yourselves. Ask your heart whether it is in search of God or whether it is in love with itself. Is it a monotheist (muwahhid) and devotee of the One, or a mushrik (polytheist) or a dualist?

What for this ‘ujb, then? What does this exultation mean? Even if, supposedly, these acts of yours fulfill all the conditions and requirements, and are free from riya’, shirk, ‘ujb and other vices, isn’t their goal acquirement of sensual ends? What merit do they possess that you consider them to be worthy of being presented before the angels? These acts are to be concealed from the sights of people. These acts, which are exercises in impudence

and vulgarity, shouldn't we shameful of them and think of doing something to cover ?up these abominable performances

God! We seek refuge in Thee from the mischief of Satan and the guiles of al-nafs al-'ammarah (the carnal self). You Yourself protect us from their wiles for the sake of .(Muhammad (S) and his Progeny (A

(Fourth Hadith: Pride (Kibr

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلی مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِیٍّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِیمَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِیسَی، عَنْ یُونُسَ، عَنْ أَبَانَ، عَنْ حَکِیمٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ أَدْنَی الإِلْحَادِ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الکِبْرَ أَدْنَاهُ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Yunus, from Aban, from Hakim; who says: I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) as to the lowest degree of ilhad (apostasy). He answered, "Verily kibr (pride) (is its lowest degree."(١

?What Is Kibr

Kibr is the name of a psychic state in which a person feels a sense of superiority and behaves high-handedly with others. Its signs are discernible in his actions and its symptoms are clearly noticed by others by which they know that he is proud. Kibr is something different from 'ujb, and, as mentioned earlier, this vice is the offspring and fruit of the tree of 'ujb. 'Ujb consists of self-love and conceit, and the meaning of kibr is to consider oneself superior to others. When someone perceives a merit in himself and is overcome by a sense of pleasure, exultation, and vanity, that state is called .'ujb

And when he considers others to be lacking in the imagined

١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Hajj .Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), pp. ۴٢١-۴٢٢

merit within himself, he perceives himself to be superior. This perception of superiority and supremacy over others causes in him a state of vanity, which is pride. Kibr, in this sense, is an inner state, and when its effects are reflected in his behavior and his speech, it is called takabbur. In short, the self-indulgent person becomes self-seeking, and his self seeking tendency grows into self-love, and when this self-love is filled to the brim it manifests itself as haughtiness and high-handed treatment of .others

Here, it is necessary to mention that the psychic traits, whether vices and infirmities or virtues and accomplishments, are extremely complicated and complex matters. It becomes extremely difficult to discern one from the other. On account of this, there is often a great difference of opinion even among great scholars in precisely defining them and it may be impossible to give a faultless definition of inner states. Therefore, it is better for us to leave this matter to the inner conscience of individuals and not to entangle ourselves in the maze of finding precise definitions, and turn attention to our .main purpose

Kinds And Degrees Of Kibr

It should be noted that there are different degrees of kibr, similar to the stages and degrees that were mentioned during the discussion about ‘ujb. However, there were some stages that could be mentioned with regard to ‘ujb, but since they were not so important in that context we abstained from mentioning them. Yet it is important to mention those stages in the context of

kibr. But at first let us note that the stages of kibr, similar to those of ‘ujb, are six in :number

.Kibr on account of possessing true faith and belief .۱

. As opposed to it is the pride in invalid faith and false belief .۲

.Pride on account of good qualities and praiseworthy attributes .۳

.Pride in moral vices and undesirable qualities .۴

.Pride in one’s righteous deeds and devotional exercises .۵

.Pride in sinful and wicked deeds .۶

It is possible that each one of these stages may be caused by the equivalent degree of ‘ujb present in one’s soul, or it may have some other reason, which we shall discuss afterwards. For the time being, of our main concern here are the external factors as sources of pride- like the pride in one’s family, descent, wealth, status, position, and the like. Following that, God willing, we shall discuss the evils of this vice and their remedies, according to my ability. And I implore God’s help and assistance in making it .effective upon others as well as my own self

There are certain other aspects and levels of kibr when considered in another perspective. They are: (۱) kibr towards God; (۲) kibr towards His prophets, messengers, and awliya’ (۳) kibr in regard to the Divine Commandments, which also amounts to kibr towards God; (۴) kibr towards the creatures of God, which, too, .according to the urafa, amounts to kibr towards God

As to the kibr towards God, it is the most abominable, the most destructive, and the

highest degree of pride, and is present in infidels, those who contest God's authority, and those who make claims to divinity. Sometimes its traces are seen among some men of faith as well (whose description is not appropriate here). This kind of kibr signifies the extreme of ignorance and the absence of knowledge about one's limits .and the majesty of the Necessary Being

As to the kibr towards the prophets and awliya' of God, it was an attitude, which was :more prevalent during their own days, and the Quran reports about it in this verse

(أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا؟)

(Shall we put faith in two mortals like ourselves? (۲۳:۴۷

:([And someone from his people is reported to have said (about the Prophet [S

(لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ.)

If only this Quran had been revealed to some great man of the two towns. [i.e. (Makkah and al-Ta'if] (۴۳:۳۱

During the early days of Islam, the instances of such pride towards the awliya' of God were very frequent, examples of which are still manifested in the behavior of some .professors of Islam

As to the kibr towards the commands of God, it is seen among some sinners, such as those who abstain from performing Hajj as they do not consider the dress of ihram appropriate for themselves; abstain from salat because they consider the state of prostration as not in accordance with their position and status. Such kind of pride is sometimes seen among persons of faith, devotees, and scholars who abstain from adhan

.on account of it

Similarly there are those who would not accept a word of truth if it comes from anybody belonging to the same status as themselves, or lower. Sometimes it happens that one hears something from his colleagues or friends, and vehemently rejects it and derides the speaker, but he readily agrees with it when it is uttered by someone superior to him in religious or worldly status. It is even possible that he would accept it .with the same seriousness with which he had rejected it earlier

This person is not a seeker of truth, but his pride has drawn a curtain over the truth, to which his obsequiousness has blinded and deafened him. It is the same kind of pride, which prevents a scholar from teaching a certain subject or a certain text because he considers it below his dignity, or dissuades him from giving lessons to persons devoid of any outwardly significant position. Or one may stand away from a small mosque attended by a small number of persons for the same reasons despite knowing that the pleasure of God lies in his doing so. Sometimes the traces of pride are so subtle that the person who is afflicted by this evil, unless he is careful and serious about correcting himself, cannot know that his actions testify to the presence of kibr in his .character

As to the kibr towards the creatures of God, kibr towards men of divine knowledge and scholars is the worst form

of it, and its evil effects are graver and its harms more serious than of any other type of kibr. Of this category of kibr is the pride, which avoids the company of poor people and seeks out prominence in gatherings and meetings, and displays itself on the road and in one's carriage. Yet this evil is prevalent and inflicts all the classes of society; from the elite to the class of ulama and scholars of hadith; from the rich to the poor .and deprived classes; no one can elude it, except for those whom God Almighty saves

Sometimes it is so difficult to discern between humbleness and humility aimed at popularizing oneself, and between pride and self-containedness, that one should seek refuge in God Almighty, that He may guide us on the right path. If one is eager to reform oneself and tries to reach one's goal, the Holy God guides him with His infinite .mercy on the right path and eases one's journey on this path

The Causes Of Kibr

There are various causes of kibr, but all of them derive from the delusion, which occurs when men imagine themselves to possess some kind of excellence. This illusion leads to 'ujb, which, blending with self-love, conceals others' merits and virtues from their eyes. When that happens, the afflicted individual believes others to be inferior to himself and begins to cherish a feeling of self-esteem in his heart, as .well as manifesting a similar demeanor

For instance, one may find an individual among the

ulama and urafa who considers himself to be a visionary and a man of mystic knowledge and insight, classing himself in the category of saintly persons with a high record of good deeds. Such persons make an absurdly ostentatious show of their superiority over others, dismissing the hukama' and philosophers as nuts, the fuqaha' and muhaddithun as superficial bums, and all ordinary people as subhuman creatures .and beasts

They scorn and look down on all the creatures of God; while claiming to follow the they beat the drum of their truth-seeking, whereas the بقاء فی الله and فناء فی الله dictum of Divine teachings require of them to contemplate the creatures of God with goodwill and optimism when the least knowledge of God demands that he should not scorn .these manifestations of His Glory and Beauty

He himself would affirm this while speaking about Divine teachings, pronouncing something, which contradicts his own inner state. Yet this happens because those teachings have not penetrated his heart. The poor fellow has not attained even the station of a true believer, yet he often speaks of 'irfan. Although 'irfan has not touched .him, he claims to have realized the ultimate Truth

Among philosophers, too, there are such persons who consider themselves to be in possession of the proofs and knowledge of certain truth. They class themselves among men of certain knowledge of God who possess confirmed belief in angels and scriptures; yet they look down on others in disdain. They dismiss all other sciences

as fiction and all human beings as defective in faith and knowledge, viewing them with haughty contempt in their hearts as well as their arrogant demeanor, whereas the knowledge of the majesty of the Lord and the utter destitution of the ephemeral creature (that he is), necessitates an opposite behavior. The truly wise (hukama') are those whose knowledge of the secrets of human origin and end makes them modest and humble-God Almighty had bestowed upon Luqman the gift of wisdom; yet the Quran reports of him as saying to his son:

(وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّکَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِی الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا یُحِبُّ کُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ.)

Turn not thy cheek in scorn toward people, nor walk with pertness on the earth. Verily, God loveth not any braggart boaster. (۳۱:۱۸)

Sometimes such people are found among those who claim to be mystic masters and guides of consummate inner purity, yet, they treat the common people with pride and look down on fuqaha', ulama and their followers, and speak disparagingly of philosophers and hukama'. They consider everyone except themselves and their associates as doomed creatures. Since they themselves lack in knowledge and learning, they consider knowledge a thorn in the path of spiritual journey, and those who possess it are considered by them as devils who mislead the wayfarers in their inward journey, although their own claims to high spiritual station would tend to contradict such a viewpoint.

A spiritual guide of people must himself be free from all kinds of mortal and destructive

sins and qualities; one who claims the capacity to guide the astray should have transcended the narrowness of mundane existence and its attachments, being absorbed in the beatific vision of His Glory. He should not be haughty and disdainful .towards the creatures of God

Also among the class of fuqaha', scholars of fiqh and hadith and the students of these sciences sometimes such people are seen who view other people with scorn and treat them high-handedly, considering themselves to be worthy of every praise and appreciation. They think that everybody should obey their commands without any :hesitation, and apply the following criterion to themselves

(لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ.)

He (i.e. God) will not be questioned as to that which He does, but they will be (questioned. (۲۱:۲۳

Except for themselves and a handful of persons like themselves, they do not consider anybody to be fit to enter Paradise. Whenever something is spoken about other field of learning, they dismiss it with scorn. They unhesitatingly reject every other discipline except their own field- of which they possess very little knowledge-considering it not only unworthy of study but destructive. They denounce the scholars of other sciences due to their own ignorance. They present their own views as if their religiosity necessitates such a contempt, whereas knowledge and religion are free from such .prejudices

The Shari'ah forbids men from speaking about anything without having its proper knowledge, and considers it obligatory to respect every Muslim. This wretched fellow without possessing enough knowledge of religion

or sciences is sinful of doing something, which is against the scripture of God and the .(teachings of His Prophet (S

Yet he moulds his ideas into the form of religion; though the conduct and behavior of all the great scholars of every generation was unlike this. Each one of the branches of religious sciences demands the scholars who are associated with it to be humble, and requires them to obliterate all signs of pride from their hearts. None of the sciences gives rise to pride and none of them is against humility. Later I will explain the causes .behind this sharp contrast between their knowledge and behavior

Also among the experts of other sciences, like medicine, mathematics, physics, engineering, industrial crafts, etc., the instances of pride and arrogance are seen. They underestimate all other sciences however important they may be, and scorn the scientists belonging to them. Each one of them believes that whatever he knows is the real knowledge. They scorn people in their hearts, as well as manifest it in their .demeanor; whereas their knowledge does not require this

Some others who do not belong to any of the branches of science, like the people devoted to prayers and other devotional rites, also tend to behave high-handedly with others. They disdain people and treat them with contempt, and do not consider even great scholars as worthy of redemption. Whenever there is a discussion about knowledge, they point out that knowledge without action is useless. They give great importance to

the little knowledge that they themselves possess and view all others with 'ujb and haughty contempt, forgetting that if their worship were true and sincere it would have .reformed them

The prayer forbids one from performing indecent deeds and sins and is considered as the culmination of a Muslim's attainment (mi'raj al-mu'min). But such a person, even after performing the salat for fifty years and meticulously performing all obligatory (wajibat) and recommended (mustahabbat) religious duties, is immersed in the vice of pride which is a kind of apostasy-from head to toe, and is afflicted with 'ujb-which is uglier than any other indecency-and comes to resemble Satan and acquires his .attributes

The salat that does not forbid one from indecencies and indignities, the prayer which does not protect the heart, rather whose excessive performance vitiates the heart, is not worthy of being named as salat. The salat about which you were so particular, but on account of which you come to resemble Satan acquiring pride, his characteristic .trait, is not salat; for the salat does not result in pride either

All these are dangers of knowledge and deeds, but pride can also arise from other causes, all of which relate to a sense of one's worth and excellence which others are imagined to lack. For instance, someone who comes of a noble descent looks down on those who are not like him. Other reasons relate to personal beauty and charm, one's tribe, the number of one's supporters, followers, or pupils, which cause

arrogance and pride with respect to others who do not possess these advantages. In all cases, therefore, pride is caused by an illusion of some kind of perfection in oneself, elation on its account and ‘ujb, while others are seen to lack such an imagined merit or .advantage

Even the bad characters and persons of vicious morals, also, sometimes look down on others with haughty contempt, because they consider whatever they possess as a kind of merit and asset. Though the person afflicted with the vice of pride tries to conceal it due to some reason or other and tries to show no sign of it, but since this evil tree of pride has run its roots in his heart, its effects nevertheless manifest themselves. As soon as any change occurs in the natural condition of the possessor of this vice, as when he loses control over himself due to anger, he starts boasting of his superiority and enumerating his merits, whether they belong to the category of .knowledge or deeds or whatever

At other times, a proud person exhibits his pride, not paying any attention to its outward revelation. The intensity of his pride makes him lose control over himself. Then, his pride finds expression in his movements and pauses. In social gatherings he shows his self-importance by taking a lead over other people while entering and leaving. He neither allows the poor to join his company, nor does he himself attend their gatherings. He creates an artificial halo of

sacredness around himself and every action of his, the gait, the manner of looking at other people, the manner of speaking to them, everything is indicative of his pride and .haughtiness

One of the researchers, from whom I have borrowed the fundamentals of this discourse and have translated them, says that the lowest degree of pride in a scholar is that he should turn his back on other people as if he wants to avoid them. The lowest degree of pride in a devotee ('abid) is manifested in his stern attitude towards people and his frown, as if he wants to avoid them, or as if he is angry with them. The poor fellow does not know that piety and continence (wara') does not lie in the frowns on one's brow or forehead, not in a disdainful look and a wry face, not in avoiding the people, not in bending the head or turning the neck, but it lies inside one's heart. The ".Prophet (S) once, pointing at his chest, said, 'Piety lies here

On some occasions, the devotee boasts about himself in his speech; while expressing the purity of his soul, he makes a display of his devotional exercises, brags about himself by mentioning his pious deeds, and denounces others for their shortcomings, thus highlighting the superiority of his piety. Sometimes he does not say anything explicitly but makes some gesture, which implicitly exhibits his piety. A scholar ,afflicted with kibr may brag about his own intellectual achievements, saying

What do you know! “ Then he would mention the books read and written by him, the“ universities visited by him, the professors and authorities whom he has met, and his own scholarly endeavors. Therefore, at all times, it is necessary to seek refuge in God .from the mischiefs of the self and its wiles

Spiritual And Social Harms Of Pride

Whereas there are many vices inherent in pride itself, it generates many other vices as well. It prevents men from acquiring inward and outward merits and from enjoying the blessings of this world and the Hereafter. It causes hatred and rancor in human hearts, disgraces man in the eyes of his fellow human beings, and brings about humiliation for him. It forces other people to retaliate against him and despise him .and insult him

In al-Kafi, Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said, “There is no person who does not have a harness on his head, and an angel who attends to it. Whenever he is proud, the angel says, ‘Be humble, lest God should disgrace you’. Thus, he is the greatest of human beings in his own eyes, whereas in other people’s eyes he is the smallest of creatures. When he is humble and modest, God removes the harness from his head and the angel says to him, ‘Elevate yourself, as God Almighty is elevating you’. Thus, he is the smallest of persons in his own eyes, while the most elevated and exalted in (the eyes of others.’(١

My friend, others also possess a mind

.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, Vol. III, p. ۴۲۶ -١

similar to yours. If you behave humbly, other people will be forced to respect you and you will rise in their estimation. But, if you show arrogance, there is no good for you in it; they may even disgrace you if they find an opportunity, and treat you with indifference. And if they cannot find an opportunity of insulting you, they will despise you in their hearts and you will not find any respect in their eyes. It is, therefore, better for you to conquer their hearts with modesty and humility. Everyone with whom you associate will somehow show the signs of his attitude towards you, and if their hearts turn against you it will be something, which is against your desire.

Therefore, even if, presumably, you are interested in obtaining greatness and respect, you will have to adopt a proper course for it, which is to cultivate cordial relations with others and to, adopt a humble demeanor towards them. The result of pride will be against your aim and purpose. It does not even fulfill your worldly aspirations, which are easier to be fulfilled, and instead of this what you receive is its opposite. Besides all these, this habit will bring you disgrace and shame in the next world. In the same way as you scorned people and considered yourself to be superior to the creatures of God, and expressed an inordinate sense of pride and arrogance here, in the other world this same arrogance and pride will bring

:you disgrace and humiliation, as mentioned in a tradition reported in al-Kafi

بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ فَرْقَدٍ، عَنْ أَخِيهِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ يُجْعَلُونَ فِى صُوَرِ الذَّرِّ فَيَتَوَطَّؤُهُمُ النَّاسُ حَتَّى يَفْرَغُوا مِنَ الْحِسَابِ.

From Dawud ibn Farqad, from his brother, who said: I heard Imam al-Sadiq (A) saying: Verily the proud [on the Judgment Day] will be created in the form of ants and people (will trample them down under their feet until God is finished with the reckoning.(١

:In his last will, al Imam al-Sadiq (A) told his companions

قَالَ: وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالعَظَمَةَ وَالكِبْرَ فَإِنَّ الكِبْرَ رِدَاءُ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فَمَنْ نَازَعَ اللهَ رِدَاءَهُ قَصَمَهُ اللهُ وَأَذَلَّهُ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ.

Refrain from pride and self-glorification, since pride is God Almighty's mantle, and one who contests with God regarding His cloak, God will shatter him and disgrace him on (the Day of Resurrection.(٢

What will be the plight of the person whom God Almighty disgraces? For the things will be different in the Hereafter. Disgrace in the Hereafter will be an affair different from the disgrace and humiliation in this world. In the same way as the comforts and torments of that world bear no similarity with those in this world, and its comforts and bounties are beyond one's imaginative power, the torments and tortures in that world are also far above the reach of our imaginative faculty. Its honors are beyond the possibilities of what we can think, and its humiliations also cannot be compared with .our ideas of humiliation and disgrace

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.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi,Vol. III. p. ٤٢٤ -١

Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Shu'bah al Harrani, Tuhaf al-'uqul (Kitab furushi -٢ Islamiyyah, Tehran, ١٤٠٢ H.), Arabic text with Persian translation by Ahmad Jannati .'Ata'i, p. ٣٢٧

And the ultimate abode of the proud person is eternal damnation and hell. The tradition states:

الكِبرُ مَطَايَا النَّارِ.

i.e. 'one who rides the mount of pride is taken by it into the hell-fire.' He will not get any glimpse of Paradise as long as the traces of this vice are present in his heart. The Prophet (S) has been reported to have said:

لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الجَنَّهَ مَنْ فِى قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّهٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبرٍ.

Never can the person who possesses a speck of pride inside his heart enter Paradise.(۱)

Imam al-Baqir (A) and Imam al-Sadiq (A) have also said something almost similar to this statement. In al-Kafi Imam al-Baqir (A) is reported to have said:

العِزُّ رِدَاءُ اللهِ وَالكِبرُ إِزَارُهُ. فَمَنْ تَنَاوَلَ شَيْئاً مِنْهُ أَكَبَّهُ اللهُ فِى جَهَنَّمَ.

honor is God's robe and pride His mantle; one who wants to acquire it will be thrown into hell by God Almighty.(۲)

And that too, what kind of hell! The hell, which is prepared for the proud, is different from the hell into which other sinners will go. Here, I shall again quote the same tradition the translation of which was given earlier:

مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِى عُمَيْرٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ بُكَيْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّ فِى جَهَنَّمَ لَوَادِياً لِلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ يُقَالُ لَهُ سَقَرٌ. شَكَا (جَهَنَّمُ) إِلَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ شِدَّهَ حَرِّهِ وَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يَتَنَفَّسَ، فَأَذِنَ لَهُ، فَتَنَفَّسَ فَأَحْرَقَ جَهَنَّمَ.

This is a highly trustworthy tradition, and can even be compared to sahih. Ibn Bukayr reports from al Imam al-Sadiq

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, Vol. III, p. ۴۲۳.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, Vol. III, p. ۴۲۳.

A) that he said, "Verily there is a valley in hell for the proud called Saqar. Once it) complained to the Almighty about the intensity of its heat, and requested Him to relieve it for some time so that it may take a breath. As soon as it breathed, its breath (filled the entire hell with fire."(۱)

I take refuge in God from a place, which in spite of its being a place of torment complains about its hotness, and the hell starts burning because of its breath. We cannot comprehend in this world the extent of the intensity and strength of the fire of the Hereafter, as the difference between the intensity and weakness of torment is dependent upon several factors. One is the strength and weakness of perception, and the second is the dissimilarity of different kinds of material and their different capacities for tolerating heat. For example, gold and iron can be exposed to more heat than lead and tin, which can endure more heat than wood and coal, which are .less sensitive than flesh and skin

Another factor is the sensitivity of perception; for example the human brain, which despite being less tolerant to heat is more sensitive to it than the bones, for its power of perception is stronger. And the feebleness and intensity of the heat itself is another factor. It is more painful at a hundred degrees than at fifty. One more factor is the relative distance between the source of heat and the

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.Usul al-Kafi, Vol. III, p. ۴۲۴ -۱

material exposed to it; for instance, when fire is very near to the hand it will inflict a different kind of burn than when it affects the hand from a distance.

All these five above-mentioned factors exist at their weakest degree in this world, and at their utmost strength and force in the Hereafter. All our perceptive faculties are imperfect and weak in this world and at the same time covered with several veils. Today our vision is incapable of perceiving angels and the hell; our ears cannot hear the queer sounds of Barzakh (the Purgatory) and the cries of its inhabitants, and the clamor of the Day of Resurrection and the people thereof. Our senses cannot even perceive the heat of that place. This is on account of their own infirmity.

The Quranic verses and the traditions of the Imams (A) are full of explicit and implicit references to this issue, and it is also in accordance with discursive reason. The human body of this world is incapable of enduring heat. The cold fire of this world is strong enough to turn it into ashes in moments. But God Almighty is capable of recreating it in a form on the Day of Resurrection so that it would not be consumed by the fire of the Hereafter, a fire of so great intensity that, according to the testimony of Gabriel (A), if a link of the seventy-cubit chain of fire prepared for the inhabitants of hell is thrown into this world

.it would melt all the mountains due to its excessive heat

Therefore, the resistance of the human body will also be incomparably great in that world. Also the relationship between the body and soul is very fragile in this world. This world does not allow the soul to manifest its real faculties and powers. But that world is the world of the soul's manifestation and domination. There, the relationship of the soul with respect to the body is loaded with action and creativity-as has been established in its proper place-and this relationship is the most complete and .thorough of all relationships

This worldly fire is a faint and coldish glow and an ephemeral phenomenon combined with impurities of all kinds; whereas the fire of hell is a fire free from all impurities, and its substance is self-subsisting and self-perpetuating. It is a living substance, which burns its inhabitants with a will and consciousness, and uses all its strength to overwhelm them. You have heard about its properties from Gabriel (A), the truthful .witness

The Quran and the traditions of the Imams (A) are full of the descriptions of hell and the fire therein. However, its similitude cannot be found in this world. If all the fires of this world were to surround a human being from all sides, they will envelop only the outer surface of his body; but the hell-fire will encompass the human being from within and without and envelop the senses and the perceptive faculties. It is a

fire, which consumes the heart, the soul, and all the human faculties, pervading them .and uniting with them in a fashion, which is unexemplified in this world

Hence it is obvious that the requirements of Divine chastisement are not at all to be found in this world. Neither the material is capable of enduring its heat, nor is the agent of heat a complete one, nor are the perceptive faculties at their complete acuteness. The fire the heat of whose breath fills the hell with flames, we and our perceptive senses fail to comprehend it, unless, God forbid, we, belonging to the clan of the proud, leave the world without purifying ourselves from this abominable vice, :and see it face to face

(فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ.)

'!What an evil abode is that of the arrogant

Other Causes Of Pride

Besides the above-mentioned factors that cause pride, there are some others also, such as narrow-mindedness, lack of capacity, petty-mindedness, baseness, and lack of fortitude. Being a person with a narrow mentality, as soon as he beholds any merit in himself he imagines himself to enjoy a kind of superiority. He thinks he has acquired a high station, whereas, if he justly evaluates it and judges his accomplishments and merits, he would see that what he imagined to be perfection and is so proud of is not at all an accomplishment or merit, and even if it were a merit how insignificant it was .when compared to other persons' accomplishments

Poor fellow, he has made his cheeks ruddy with a slap

to give an impression of healthiness. The ‘arif who disdains others on account of his pride in his mystic knowledge, and considers others superciliously to be superficial and shallow, what knowledge does he possess about God, except for a handful of concepts and terms that are in reality veils of realities and hindrances in his religious path? What is this knowledge except for a number of glamorous and gaudy terms which do not have any relevance whatsoever to the knowledge of God? How far are they from the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His Names and Attributes.

Knowledge is a quality of the heart, and in the view of this writer all these are practical sciences, and consist not of mere acquaintance with certain abstract concepts or artful juggling of terms. With this short life and limited knowledge, I have seen certain people among these so-called mystics and other scholars who, I swear by ‘irfan and knowledge that these terms have not made any mark on their hearts; nay, they have rather left on them an opposite effect! My friend! the knowledge of God, in your own words, makes the heart a place where His Names, Attributes, and Essence are manifested, a stage for the appearance of the Real Monarch, who obliterates all signs and purges it of all stains and removes from it all limitations:

(إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً.)

Indeed, kings, when they enter a township, ruin it and degrade its men of

(honor. (۲۷:۳۴

It converts your heart into a Unitarian and the one filled with the praise of the Lord. But why did it make your heart a place of your own glorification? Why has it added unnecessary colors to it, and accumulated trappings and accretions that deter you from obtaining nearness to God Almighty and from beholding the effulgent glory of His Names? Why, it has made your heart an abode of Satan and so you look down on the servants of God and His chosen, the signs and reflections of His Glory and Splendor! Woe unto you for your wretchedness, O 'arif, whose condition is worse than of anybody else, and all the doors of defense and pretext are sealed upon him! You are proud towards God and have assumed a Pharaonic arrogance towards His Names, Attributes, and all the manifestations of His Essence. O amateurish student of concepts who has gone astray of the realities! Deliberate over the matter for a while, .and think as to what knowledge you possess of God

What impact has the knowledge of God and His Attributes made on your self? Perhaps the study of music and musical rhythms may be more exact and precise than your knowledge. Astronomy, mechanics, other physical sciences, and mathematics can match your learning as to the precision of their terminology. Yet in the same way as they are not concerned with the knowledge of God, your knowledge also is a thick ,curtain consisting of the veils of words

terms, and concepts. They can neither make one ecstatic nor send anyone into a .trance

Rather, in the eyes of the Shari'ah, the physical sciences and mathematics are better than your knowledge, since they produce some result, whereas your knowledge not only gives no good results, but gives opposite ones. An engineer draws results from his calculations, and a goldsmith is benefited from his craftsmanship; but your knowledge, apart from not gaining any material benefits, has failed to fulfill any .transcendental ends as well

Rather, the veil before your eyes is so thick that when you try to picture the Unity of the Divine Being a world of utter darkness fills your imagination, and when His Names and Attributes are mentioned an infinite plurality is pictured by your mind. Therefore, these terms did not lead you to the path of Truth, but on the contrary they have .become a source of pride and arrogance towards the righteous scholars

A knowledge, which darkens the heart and increases it in its blindness is not knowledge. A learning, which ultimately makes its possessor an heir of the Devil, woe unto such learning! Kibr is the property of Satan's nature. He was arrogant to your father, Adam, and was expelled from the Almighty's court. You who are arrogant towards all human beings and all the sons of Adam are also worthy of banishment. .From this you can infer the plight of the scholars of other sciences also

A Hakim, a man of wisdom, if he is

a real sage, having comprehended the relationship between God Almighty and His creatures and himself, the sense of superiority remains no more in his heart. But the unfortunate seeker of terminology and terms has mistaken them for hikmah (wisdom) and ‘ilm (knowledge) and imagines himself to be an ‘alim and Hakim. He even associates himself with the Attributes of the Necessary Being and says that ’hikmah is one of the Attributes of God Almighty

الحِكْمَهُ هِیَ التَّشَبُّهُ بِالإلَهِ.

.Wisdom is what makes [man] similar to God

At other times he groups himself with the prophets and messengers of God, and ,recites the Quranic phrase

(وَيُعَلِّمُهُمْ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَهَ.)

.He teaches them the Book and Wisdom

:And sometimes reiterates the Prophet’s hadith

الحِكْمَهُ ضَالَّهُ المُؤْمِنِ، وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الحِكْمَهَ فَقَدْ أُوتِیَ خَيْراً كَثِيراً.

Hikmah is the lost property of a mu’min; one who is endowed with hikmah has been .given an immense measure of good

While his heart is unaware of hikmah and several thousand stages away from all good and he is himself a stranger to hikmah. The great Muslim thinker and philosopher Muhaqqiq Damad (R) states that a Hakim is a person who can discard his body like a dress whenever he wants to. What does he say and what are we saying! What meaning did they understand from hikmah and how do we conceive it? And you with your pride in your knowledge of a handful of concepts and a few terms, who treat the creatures of God with haughty contempt-it becomes quite clear that you are a

.petty minded and shallow person

Those who style themselves as murshids (leaders of mystic orders) and guides of God's creatures, offering spiritual assistance and pretending Sufi insight, their state is worse than that of the two former groups, and their conceit is greater than theirs. They appropriate the terminology of those two groups, and set out their goods for sale in the marketplace. They have distracted the attention of the creatures of God from Him, attracting them towards themselves, having made those simple-hearted creatures to view the ulama and other people with suspicion. For the sake of some mean profit, they have coined some attractive terms to deceive credulous people, thinking that titles like 'Majdhub 'Ali Shah' and 'Mahbub 'Ali Shah' will produce love for .God or create some kind of ecstasy or bliss

O seeker of the world! You thief of concepts and ideas, this activity of yours does not call for pride and exultation. Poor fellow, he is befooled by his own petty-mindedness and narrowness of capacity, considering himself to be a person of high spiritual station. His own tricks have fooled him. His infatuation with himself, his love of the world, and his obsession with some stolen ideas and conceptual trappings and auxiliaries have coalesced to form strangely vicious and perverse admixture. Yet with all these flaws, the poor fellow imagines himself to be a murshid, a guide and liberator of mankind, and knower of the secrets of the Shari'ah! No, sometimes this impudence surpasses all limits and

he imagines himself to be at the pinnacle of wilayah ! This situation arises due to the lack of capacity, the poverty of merits, the narrowness of the mind and the heart, and .the suffocating contraction of the breast

You too, O student of fiqh, hadith and other religious sciences, you also have no share of knowledge except for some terms which have gained currency in usul and hadith. If this learning, which is altogether related to practice and action, has not brought any improvement in you and has not rectified you, but instead of this given rise to moral and practical vices in you, your performance is inferior to that of the experts of other sciences and incomparable in its worthlessness with the baser activities of all other .people

All those concepts, verbiage, rivalries, and disputations-most of which have no relevance to the religion of God and cannot be considered to be belonging to any sciences either, nor could be regarded as the fruit of knowledge-that does not call for so much of pride and exultation. I make God my witness-and suffices He for testimony-if the result of your knowledge is that it cannot guide you on the right path, nor can it guard you against vices of morals and deeds, the meanest and basest of vocations is better than this learning, because it shows some immediate results and .has fewer this-worldly and other-worldly harms

You, poor fellow, who acquire nothing but a painful burden, hard to carry, your burden does

not bring you anything but corrupt morals and perverse deeds. Therefore, your knowledge does not call for any pride and exultation either. Nevertheless, the horizon of your mind is so narrow that as soon as you prepared a hotchpotch of some terms you started thinking yourself to be a great scholar, fit to walk over the plumes of archangels under your feet, and other people as ignorant creatures. Your arrogant gait restricts the passage for the servants of God in alleys and your conceit .encroaches on the roominess of social gatherings

Yet the meanest among the arrogant is the person who is proud of outward matters like wealth, position, family and descent. This poor fellow is far from all human excellences and moral sense; his hands are empty of all learning and knowledge; but since his clothes are made of sheep's wool, or since his father is somebody, he is arrogant with the people. What a petty mind and a dark and narrow heart it is that leaves all accomplishments and perfections to be content with the niceties of a robe and hat! For his beautiful cloak and cap, he has given up all other beauties of .character and soul

Poor fellow, he is satisfied to survive on the plane of beasts and is happy with bestial pleasures, having forgone the dignity of human station for what he considers to be some sort of status, choosing a meaningless and hollow existence, and a blank form devoid of reality and truth. He

is so base and hollow that if he meets someone who is superior to him in respect of worldly advantages, he behaves with him like a slave with his master. Of course, one ...whose goal is nothing but the world, is a slave of the worldly and the world

In any case, narrowness of vision, pettiness of mind, and lack of capaciousness of personality, together, are a strong factor responsible for pride, which makes its victim to have 'ujb and kibr and makes him highly sensitive to qualities which are neither a kind of perfection nor any merit of note. And the more one is infatuated with one's self .and with the world, the more he is likely to be affected by these things

?How To Cure Pride

Now that you have known the viciousness of pride, it is now your duty to resolve to cure yourself of this disease and to make up your mind to purge your heart from its taints and remove its traces and its heavy dust from the mirror of your heart. If you are among the people of strong will power and an open heart, and the worldly desires have not driven their tentacles deep into it, and if the worldly allurements and ornaments have not blinded it by their light, and if you are still capable of judging and criticizing yourself with justice, the suggestions given in the previous chapter can be .most useful for you in this regard

But if you have not reached this level, it is

better for you to meditate upon your state; it is possible that your heart may wake up. O man, who were initially nothing; who were hidden in the folds of nothingness for ages and epochs, more insignificant than nothingness itself and absent from the realms of existence, when God Almighty resolved to create you, you were the most deficient of the recipients, mean, and insignificant. You were incapable of receiving the Divine effusion (fayd). He created you from the matter (hayula) of the universe, which is absolute potentiality and pure weakness, and moulded you into an elemental .bodily form, which was the lowest, and the meanest of the existents of the universe

After that you were given the form of sperm, which you will loathe to touch it and will take great pains for cleansing your hands if by chance they are made dirty by it. Then you were kept in a very narrow and unclean place, the twin reproductive glands of the father. And after that through the urinary tract in a terribly ugly state you were brought into the mother's womb and you were given such a place to live in, that description will be disgusting to you. After being placed there, you were given the form of a fetus and a lump of clotted blood. There you were nourished with such a food that you will go mad if you are told about it, and will feel ashamed. But since ,everyone has to pass through this tribulation

.it abates our shame of it

وَالبَلِيَّهُ إِذَا عَمَّتْ طَابَتْ.

.A distress, which is common, becomes tolerable

During all these stages of evolution and change you were the lowest and meanest of creatures. You lacked in all external and internal perceptive faculties and devoid of every kind of merit. After that, with His great kindness and mercy, He made you capable of receiving the gift of life, the life that was manifested in you was so imperfect and fragile that it was, even inferior to that of a worm in its biological functions. In order to improve your deficient capacity, He gradually improved your functions with His mercy and compassion, until you became fit for entering this world and facing its climes. Through the meanest of corridors and in the worst possible condition you were made to enter this realm. Yet you were still weaker than and .inferior to the young ones of all the animals

After that, despite acquiring the maximum of your internal and external powers and abilities, you are still so weak and vulnerable that none of your own powers is under your full control You can neither safeguard your health, nor can you guard your own life and energies, nor can you preserve your beauty and youth. If any calamity of an illness befalls you, you do not possess enough power to repel it. In short, you don’t .have any control over any aspect of your own being and existence

If you face starvation for one day, you

will not resist from eating any kind of rotten cadaver. If your thirst were to overwhelm you, you will be ready to drink from dirty and fetid water. Similarly, in all matters you are a helpless and abject slave who has no power over anything. If you compare yourself with the existence and perfection of the existence and other living beings, you will realize that you and your entire planet, or even the whole solar system, have no significance whatsoever in front of the whole physical world, which is the meanest .and the smallest of all other worlds

My dear, you have not seen anything except yourself, and whatever you have seen you did not compare it with the world around you. Compare whatever you possess, from your life to the worldly treasures in your possession, with your city, your city with your country, and your country with all the hundreds of the countries of the world, whose names you might not have even heard of, and all those countries with the whole solar system and its vast spheres which are not more than tiny fragments of the sun, and the whole solar system with the Milky Way, of which our sun along with its planets is one of millions of other stars and a part of the huge galaxy, and there are .several million of such galaxies like the Milky Way

All these are a part of the physical world, whose vastness is not known to anyone except its Creator

and the discoveries of the discoverers have succeeded in revealing only a small fraction of it. Yet this physical world has no significance whatsoever as compared to the supra-physical world, whose realms lie beyond the powers of imagination of the human intellect. In the light of this, let us reexamine the extent and scope of our lives .and the share of our fortune in the realm of existence

Thereafter, when God Almighty resolves to take you away from this world, He commands all your powers to deteriorate and your perceptive faculties to halt their activities. The mechanism of your life is broken down; your auditory and visual senses, and your energies are taken back from you and you become an inanimate inorganic substance. After the passage of a few hours, people will not be able to tolerate the stench emanating from your body and they will be averse to the view of your body and face. All your bodily members and organs will decompose and disintegrate after a few days. Such is the state of your body, and what will happen to .your wealth and glory is also quite obvious

But as for your life in Barzakh (the Purgatory), if you depart, God forbid, without reforming yourself, God alone knows what conditions and states will be prescribed for you therein. Perceptions of the inhabitants of this world are incapable of seeing, hearing, and smelling the affairs of that world. Whatever you hear of the darkness, the dreads, and the pressures of

the grave, you compare them with this-worldly dreads and pressures, but you are mistaken. O God, help us, and rescue us from the calamity of what we ourselves have prepared with our own hands. The punishment of the grave, which is a model of the punishment in the Hereafter-and according to some traditions we will not be able to avail in the Barzakh any intercession of the intercessors-God alone knows what kind of punishment it will be! The state of affairs on the Day of Resurrection will be worse and more dreadful than all the past phases. It, will be the day of the revelation of secrets, the manifestation of truths, and the day of the embodiment of morals and actions. It will be the day of reckoning and the day of disgrace. Such is the Day of !Resurrection

The Punishment In The Hereafter

As to the conditions of the hell after the Day of Resurrection, they are also known to you. Would you like to know more about the hell? The punishment of hell will not be confined to the torments of fire alone; a dreadful door will be opened to your eyes, which if opened to this world its dread will destroy all of its inhabitants. A similar door will open to your flesh, another to your nose, each of which will be sufficient to kill the inhabitants of this world. One of the experts in the knowledge of the Hereafter says that in the same way as the heat of hell will reach

.the climax of its extremity, its coldness will also be at the highest point of coldness

God Almighty is capable of bringing together these two extreme opposites. Such are the dreads of the Hereafter. In the light of all this, one whose beginning lies in infinite nothingness; one who from the point he steps into the world of existence, all whose stages of development are ugly and indecent; all whose states are shameful; whose conditions in the world, the Purgatory and the Hereafter, each one is more horrible ?and disgraceful than the other-what reason has he for pride

What merit or glory makes him so boastful? Therefore, those whose ignorance is more and whose rational faculties are more defective, are more proud of themselves; and those whose knowledge is greater, whose souls are more capacious, and whose .breasts are spacious-they are humbler and more modest

(Humility And Modesty Of The Prophet (S

The Prophet (S), whose knowledge was derived from the Divine Revelation, and whose soul was so great that it could preponderate over the spirits of millions upon millions of human beings, who rejected all the practices and customs of the pagan Arabs, who shattered under his feet all the false creeds, abrogated all the scriptures, and the circle of prophethood achieved its completion in his noble existence; who was the ruler of the world and the hereafter, and who was the master of all the worlds, with the permission of God Almighty; yet his humility towards the creatures of God was more than of any other

.human being

He hated to see his Companions stand up in his respect. Whenever he entered a gathering, he used to sit in the lowest place He used to dine on the floor and used to sit on the floor and used to say, "I am a slave of God; I dine like a slave and sit in the manner proper for a slave." It has been reported from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Prophet (S) preferred to ride a donkey without a saddle, preferred to dine in a lowly place with the slaves, and offered alms to beggars with his two hands. That holy personage used to ride a donkey and used to sit on the mount with a slave or some .other man

It is written about him (S) that he used to share with the members of his household the duties of housework himself used to milk the sheep, stitch his own clothes and shoes, grind the flour and knead the dough, and carry his belongings himself. He liked the company of the poor and the destitutes and used to dine with them. Such, and better than what we have described, was the character and the modesty of this great personage, although besides holding his high spiritual station he held to perfection the authority of a temporal sovereign. Similar was the life and character of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A), who also followed the Prophet's way, and his character was identical to that .(of the Prophet (S

To Cure Pride, One Should Act Against Its Dictates

,Therefore

my friend, if you are proud of your spiritual attainments, they (i.e. the Prophet and Imam 'Ali) were over and above all of us in this respect; and if you have pride in your office and authority, they possessed true sovereignty. Yet, in spite of it, their humility and modesty was more than of anybody else. This shows that humility is the product .of knowledge and wisdom, and pride is the outcome of ignorance

Therefore, free yourself from the ignominy of ignorance and the disgrace of petty-mindedness; acquire the attributes of the prophets and shed the qualities of Satan. Do not contend with your God regarding His mantle of Pride and Glory, as His wrath will subdue the contender and he will fall on his face into hell-fire. If you make up your mind for rectifying your self, the way to do so is also easy if you are somewhat persevering. You will not encounter any peril on this way if you move with manly resolve, freedom of thought, and high-mindedness. The only way of overpowering your carnal self and repelling the insinuations of Satan is to act against their .incitements

No other way is better for crushing the desires of the self as adopting the traits and qualities of the modest and following their behavior and character. In whatever stage of pride you may be, and to whatever scientific or professional field you belong, you are advised to act against the inclinations and desires of the self. By discovering

and meditating about this-worldly and other-worldly consequences of pride, it is hoped, your journey will become easier and you will reach the desired goal. If your self wishes that you should take the seat of chairmanship of the gathering or to take precedence over your colleagues and equals, you should act against its desire. If your self incites you to refrain from joining the company of the poor and indigent, admonish it severely and resolutely go and sit in their company, dine with them and .travel with them

It is possible that your inner self would try to prevent you by arguing that you are a person of a higher position and that it is essential to keep up your esteem and dignity for the sake of the propagation of the Shari'ah, that sitting with the poor will undermine your respect in society, that humor with the subordinates will be injurious to your authority, that occupying a lowly place in gatherings will affect your status and .then you will not be able to perform your religious duties properly... and so on

Be certain that all these are guiles of the Devil and wiles of the self. You have read and heard about the behavior and character of the Holy Prophet (S), whose worldly .position was incomparably superior to you

A Reminiscence Of A Teacher

Among the scholars of our own times, I have seen a person who enjoyed great eminence throughout the Shi'ah world and followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (S). The respected teacher

and the revered faqih Hajj Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karim Ha’iri Yazdi enjoyed the sole marji’iyyah (Shiite jurisprudential authority) of the Shiite world from ۱۳۴۰/۱۹۲۱ to ۱۳۵۵/۱۹۳۶. We have all seen his simplicity. He used to travel and dine with his servants. He used to sit on the floor and make all kind of strange jokes with the most junior of .students

During his last days, when he had taken ill, with slippers on, he used to walk in the alley after the sunset, without a cloak and turban and with a piece of cloth wrapped around his head. Regard and respect for him grew in the hearts of the people, and .these acts of him did not affect his high station either

There were other great scholars in Qum besides him, for whom these barriers that are created for you by the Devil did not exist. They used to buy their foodstuffs and goods by themselves, used to fetch water from the water tanks and attend to the duties of housework also. They meted out equal treatment to the senior and the junior and did not differentiate between the first rankers and others of a subordinate rank. Their humanity and modesty made people wonder and their respect was also not lowered; rather it was enhanced in the hearts of the people. Anyhow, the .attributes of the Prophet (S) and Imams (A) do not derogate people

But one should be cautious of the guiles of the self while opposing it, as it may

lure you into its snares and use other tactics for defeating your purpose. For example, you will observe some person occupy an inconspicuous place in a gathering, but in a fashion, which is meant to make others understand that his position is superior to all the others present and that it was but a gesture of humility and modesty on his part .that he has occupied that place

Or, for instance, if he had declined in favor of a person of uncertain superiority over himself, he will give priority over himself to someone who it is certain is of a lower rank, thus immediately making it clear that he had declined in favor of the first one because of his own humility. These, and hundreds other like this, are the wiles of self, which add riya' and hypocrisy to pride, and unless one does not resolve to combat .them with a sincere determination one will not succeed in rectifying one's self

All the vices of the soul are rectifiable, but a little diligence is needed in the beginning. After one has entered the process of self-correction, everything becomes easier for him. The main thing is to realize the need for the rectification of the self and to wake ,up from the spell of self-negligence

Yaqzah (Awakening) Is The First Step

The first stage of humanness is yaqzah. It signifies the awakening from the slumber of obliviousness and the intoxication of physical nature, and the realization of the fact that man is a traveler and like any other

traveler he also needs some provisions for this journey. His morality and character .are his provisions for this journey

The only means of undertaking this hazardous and perilous journey on this dark and narrow path, which is sharper than the sword's blade and thinner than a hair, is manly courage. The light of this path is one's faith and one's good qualities. If he is lazy and negligent and gives in to weakness, he will not be able to cross it with safety and will fall headlong into the hell of disgrace and into the gorge of perdition. And one who cannot pass safely over this path will, also, not be able to pass over the Sirat in the .Hereafter

My dear, be brave and tear apart the curtain of ignorance and folly and deliver yourself from this terrible abyss. 'Ali (A), the Lord of the Pious, the unique wayfarer of the paths of heavens and the real guide, used to cry out in the mosque so loudly that :he could be heard in the neighborhood

تَجَهَّزُوا – رَحِمَكُمُ اللهُ – فَقَدْ نُودِىَ فِيكُمْ بِالرَّحِيلِ.

.Equip yourselves and be ready, your departure has already been announced

No preparations will be more beneficial to you than your good moral characteristics and merits, the heart's piety, the righteous deeds, and the purity and spotlessness of your conscience. If, supposedly, you are a person of incomplete and apparent faith, you should cleanse yourself of these impurities so that Divine mercy will put you amongst the righteous and

pious servants of God. Only the fire of repentance (tawbah) will clean these impurities, when the self is melted in the furnace of self-reproach with the fuel of remorse and return towards God. Today perform this smelting yourself, in this world; otherwise only God knows how many centuries of the Hereafter it will take for your soul to be refined in the furnace of Divine chastisement, and with a fire of which it has been said:

(نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَهُ. الَّتِی تَطَّلِعُ عَلَی الْأَفْئِدَهِ.)

(It is the fire of Allah, kindled, which leapeth up over the hearts. (۱۰۹-۶-۷)

It is much easier to purify oneself in this world, as changes occur rapidly in this world; but in the next world, the process of change will be a prolonged process, and the effacement of one evil attribute of the soul will take several centuries.

Therefore, my dear, try to reform your self as long as you possess life, youth, energy, and freedom. Do not pay any attention to this-worldly fame and glory. Trample such phantoms under your feet. You are the. son of Adam (A), so free your self from the trait. of Satan Perhaps the Devil gives more importance to see that this vice, which is characteristic of his own nature and for which he was driven out of the court of the Almighty God, is shared by everyone, the sage or the commoner, the scholar or the unlettered, and that they join his fold.

Then if you meet him in the next world, having

carried this vice with you, he will rebuke you for having adopted this vice. he will say to you, 'O son of Adam! Didn't the prophets inform you that my haughtiness towards your father drove me out of the court of the Almighty? I was cursed due to my scorning of Adam and my self glorifying. Why did you allow yourself to be afflicted by "?this vice

At that time, you, wretched creature that you would be, besides confronting all kind of humiliations and tortures, besides all the regret and remorse, will also have to face the rebukes of the most wretched of beings and the basest of creatures. Satan was not guilty of pride towards God, but of pride towards the creature of God and had said :to Him

(خَلَقْتَنِی مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِینٍ.)

(Thou createdst me of fire., and him Thou didst create of clay. (۷:۱۲

In this manner he glorified himself and looked down on Adam (A). You, also, who look down on the progeny of Adam and glorify yourself, have disobeyed God's Commands; for God has commanded His creatures to be modest and humble towards other human beings. You who treat people with haughty contempt, why do you curse the ?Devil alone

Why don't you include your vicious self also in this curse, as it also shares this vice with him? The proud man is a personification of all Satans; perhaps in the purgatory and on the Day of Resurrection, his appearance will be that of Satan. The

criterion of man's form in the Hereafter are his spiritual qualities. It's possible that you will acquire the form of Satan as well as the size of an ant. The standards in the .Hereafter will be different from those in this world

The Vicious Subtleties Of The Self

Sometimes it happens that a person who lacks a certain merit is proud towards the possessor of that merit, such as when a poor person is proud towards a rich one or when an ignorant one is proud towards a learned person. It should be remembered that in the same way as 'ujb is sometimes the source of pride, jealousy (hasad) may also be the source of pride. One may perceive himself as lacking in a certain merit, which is present in another; then he becomes jealous of him and this serves as the .cause of pride towards the other person, whom he tries to insult in all possible ways

In al-Kafi it has been reported from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said, "Pride is found in the most vicious of human beings, to whatever kind they may belong." Then he added: "Once the Prophet (S) was passing through one of the lanes of al-Madinah where a negress was gathering dung. She was told to move aside and allow the Prophet (S) to pass. She answered that the passage was wide enough. One of the persons who accompanied the Prophet (S) tried to threaten her, but the Prophet (S) prevented him from doing so, saying: Leave her alone, she is

".a proud woman

Sometimes this vicious habit is seen among some scholars, who make an excuse that to act with humility with the wealthy is not a virtue. Their vicious self makes them believe that modesty with the rich weakens faith. The poor fellow cannot differentiate between the humility before wealth and humility towards the rich and others. It is true that sometimes the vice of love of the world and the ambition for worldly honor and glory makes men to adopt modest and humble behavior. This cannot be counted as .modesty; it is flattery, and is reckoned as a moral vice

The possessor of this trait does not show humbleness to the poor, except when his self-interest requires it or when he uses it as a bait. But it is also true that the virtue of humility of men invites man to act with modesty and humility towards the others, irrespective of whether they are rich or poor, whether of enviable conditions or not. That is, their modesty is sincere and pure. Their souls are clean and unstained by the love for popularity in society and honor, which have no charm for them. This kind of .humility and modesty is good with the poor, and it is good with the rich as well

Everyone should be treated with the respect that is due to him. But this pride and contempt of yours towards the rich and wealthy is not on account of the fact that you ,are not a sycophant

but it is because you are a jealous person, and you do not understand this. If the same rich man were unexpectedly to show you respect, you will be humble and modest with him. In any case, the snares and the skilful guiles of the self are so subtle that one .cannot do anything except taking refuge in God

وَالحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

.And Praise is God's, in the beginning and the end

(Fifth Hadith: Envy (Hasad

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ يُونُسَ عَنْ دَاوُدَ الرَّقِّيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِمُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا بْنَ عِمْرَانَ لا تَحْسِدَنَّ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَيْتُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِي وَلا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلى ذَلِكَ وَلا تُتْبِعْهُ نَفْسَكَ، فَإِنَّ الحَاسِدَ سَاخِطٌ لِنِعْمَتِي ضَادٌّ لِقِسْمِي الَّذِي قَسَمْتُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِي، وَمَنْ يَكُ كَذَلِكَ فَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ وَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni), from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Yunus, from Dawud al-Raqqi, who reports from Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) that the Apostle of God (S) said that God Almighty addressed Musa ibn 'Imran (A) thus: "O son of 'Imran, never be envious of people concerning the favors I have conferred on them by My grace, do not glower at them, and do not succumb to your (envious) self. Indeed the envious man is indignant at the bestowal of My favor, and contests My apportioning of gifts among My creatures. Whoso is such, he neither (belongs to Me nor do I belong to him."(١

Definition Of Hasad

Hasad or

Usul al-Kafi (Pub. by Intishirat-e'ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Arabic text with Persian - ١ .translation by Hajj Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), vol. III, p. ۴١٨

envy is a psychic state in which a person wishes for the deprivation of a blessing, talent or merit, real or imagined, possessed by another person. It does not make any difference to the envious man whether lie possesses it or not, whether he can acquire .it or not

The term 'imagined' is used here for the reason that it is not necessary that there should be any real merits or advantage in the true sense of the word. For it has been established by observation that even things which are vices and defects, on account of their being considered by the envious as excellences and merits, he desires their .destruction

Sometimes it is also true that certain attributes, which are a defect in a human being but are bestial accomplishments are envied by the envious man on account of the significance that he attaches to such qualities. He sees them as merits on account of his animal state, and desires that the other man should be deprived of them. For instance, there are certain persons who consider ruthlessness and brutality as .virtues, and when they see a person possessing these qualities they envy him

There are some who consider the capacity for idle talk and vulgar jokes as virtues, and they feel jealous of those skilled at them. Therefore, the criterion for identifying this psychic disease is the imagined existence of merits and the suspected presence of accomplishments in the mind of the afflicted person, not the real presence of

merit and accomplishment itself. In short, whenever a person notices any merit (real or imaginary) in others and wishes for their loss and destruction, such a person is .described as hasid or envious

Kinds Of Hasad

There are various kinds and degrees of hasad according to the state and condition of the mahsud (the one envied), the hasud (the one who envies), and the nature of .hasad itself

According to the condition of the mahsud: Qualities like certain intellectual, spiritual, and moral merits, or good and pious deeds, or outward factors like wealth, honor, and prestige can cause envy. Also their antithetical qualities, when they are imagined to .be merits, can also cause envy and jealousy

According to the condition of the envious person: The feeling of envy in the heart of the person who harbors it is sometimes caused by enmity, sometimes by pride, and at .other times by fear and the like-causes which will be discussed later on

According to the condition of envy itself: As for envy itself, the classification performed on its basis is an essential one, not those performed on the previous bases. There are several stages and grades of intensity and weakness according to their various causes and effects. God willing, we will deal with their harmful effects and the methods of curing them in several sections according to our capabilities, and hope to .receive His assistance in this regard

The Causes And Motives Of Hasad

There are numerous causes of hasad, and the main among them, as opposed to kibr, are products of a feeling of one's

inferiority. In the same way as a person contemplating his own merits considers others to lack them, with a sense of elation, exultation, and rebelliousness overcoming him; in the same manner when someone perceives others to be more perfect, a feeling of inferiority and dejection seizes him, which, with the help of .external factors and inner propensities, generate the feeling of envy in his heart

Sometimes it may happen that he feels dejected on account of someone sharing his merit, such as when a person endowed with a merit feels jealous of those on an equal or lower footing than himself. Therefore, it may be said that envy is a state of abjectness and dejection, which finds an expression in the desire for the destruction, or deprival of others' merits and advantages. Accordingly, some scholars, like :al-'Allamah al-Majlisi, have confined the causes of envy to the following seven

.Enmity .۱

The sense of one's supremacy: It may happen that the envious man anticipates the .۲ pride of the envied on account of a merit and advantage that he enjoys. Not having the patience to put up with the pride, he earnestly desires the loss of those merits and .advantages

Kibr (pride): The envious person desires to treat high-handedly the person who is .۳ conferred some merit or favor, which is not possible unless those favors and merits .are lost

Wonder: The envious person is puzzled to see the great blessing enjoyed by the .۴ object of his envy. God Almighty reports the nations of

the past as saying to the prophets:

(إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا.)

(Ye are but mortals like us. (۱۴:۱۰)

And:

(فَقَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا؟)

(And they said: 'Shall we put faith in two mortals like ourselves?' (۲۳:۴۷)

They wondered as to how a mortal like them could reach the high station of prophethood and be inspired by God; so they felt envious on account of it.

۵. Fear: The envious man is apprehensive of some hindrance on the part of the person enjoying an advantage or merit that may, he fears, frustrate his cherished aims and objectives.

۶. Love of authority: This becomes a cause of envy when one's acquiring or preserving authority over others requires that nobody should share his advantages or merits.

۷. Viciousness of nature: The man of vicious nature does not like to see others enjoying any kind of good whatsoever.

In the view of this writer, most, or rather all, of these causes are derived from the feeling of inferiority and dejection.

Some Evil Effects Of Envy

Envy itself is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart. The mortal diseases of the heart, like pride and other vices, though each is a mortal sin in itself, produces additional vices each of which is fatal independently. We shall discuss here a few of them, which are apparent and known to this author. There may be others, which are hidden and unknown. In two sahih traditions Imam al-Sadiq (A) and Imam al-Baqir (A) inform us about the evil effects of hasad:

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَهَ بْنِ وَهَبٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: آفَهُ

p: ۲۲۷

الدِّينِ الحَسَدُ وَالعُجْبُ وَالفَخْرُ.

Mu'awiyah ibn wahab reports that Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "Hasad, 'ujb, and vainglory (are a bane of faith."(1)

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَأْتِى بِأَدْنَى بَادِرَهٍ فَيُكَفَّرُ. وَإِنَّ الحَسَدَ لَيَأْكُلُ الإيمَانَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الحَطَبَ.

Muhammad ibn Muslim reports that Imam al-Baqir (A) said, "A man may be forgiven for something done in a fit of anger; but envy devours faith as fire consumes (wood."(2)

It is a known fact that faith is a Divine light that illumines the human heart with the :radiance of His glory, as has been related by the hadith qudsi quoted before

لا تَسَعُنِى أَرْضِى وَلا سَمَائِى، بَلْ يَسَعُنِى قَلْبُ عَبْدِىَ المُؤْمِنُ.

Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is .the heart of the man of faith, which can contain Me

The spiritual light and the divine spark, which makes the human heart greater than anything else in the world does not go along with the darkness and narrowness, caused in it by this grievous vice. This hideous quality makes the human heart so narrow and dejected that its effects become apparent throughout the realm of one's .inner and outer being

The heart becomes grieved and depressed, the chest narrow and suffocated, and the .face grim and frowning

This state extinguishes the light of faith and deadens the human heart. The more it gains in strength, the more it diminishes the brightness of faith. All the inward and outward attributes of faith

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١ - Usul al-Kafi (Pub. by Intishirat-e'ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Arabic text with Persian

.translation by Hajj Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), vol. III, p. ۴۱۸

Usul al-Kafi (Pub. by Intishirat-e'ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Arabic text with Persian - ۲
.translation by Hajj Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), vol. III, p. ۴۱۶

are negated by the effects of envy, which are manifested within and without one's personality. The man of faith is optimistic and has a hopeful attitude towards God, and is satisfied with the way He has divided and apportioned His bounties among His creatures. The envious person is displeased with God and is resentful of the fate apportioned by Him. As mentioned in tradition, a believer is not malicious towards .other believers; he loves them, whereas the envious man acts in an opposite manner

A true believer is not possessed by the love of mundane things, whereas the envious man is afflicted with this vice due to his love of the world. A believer has no fear or grief whatsoever in his heart, except for that which is associated with the Ultimate Source and End of all being. But the fears and griefs of the envious man revolve around the person of whom he is jealous. The believer has a beaming countenance, which depicts his cheerful nature. The envious man has a frowning face and a grim .countenance. The believer is humble, and is (most of the time) not proud or envious

Envy destroys faith in the same way as fire burns up wood. Therefore, there does not exist any doubt about the danger of this vice, which wrests from man his faith, the source of his salvation in the Hereafter and the life and vigor of his heart, and reduces .him into a helpless wretch

A great evil that is an

inseparable ingredient of envy is indignation with the Creator and the Beneficent Nourisher and annoyance with His ordainments. Deprived of vision by the dark veils of carnal nature, our immersion in the world of senses has blinded the eyes and deafened the ears. We do not understand that we are angry with the King of kings, nor know as to what form our anger and resentment will acquire as the result of this vice in the next world, our permanent abode. We hear the words of Imam al-Sadiq (A):

وَمَنْ يَكُ كَذَلِكَ فَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ وَلَيْسَ مِنِّى.

Whoso is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him.

Yet we do not understand the magnitude of the misfortune of God Almighty's disowning us, and what His disgust with us will bring for us. One who is driven out from the sphere of His wilayah (guardianship) and is not accepted under the standard of the Mercy of the Most Merciful, there is no hope of his salvation. He will, not be able to receive any intercession of the intercessors either:

(مَنْ ذَا الَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ.)

(Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? (۲:۲۵۵)

Who will act as an intercessor for one who is wrathful and resentful towards God, outside the pale of His wilayah, and whose bonds of love between him and his Lord have been severed? Woe to us for the calamity we have invited for ourselves! Despite all the warnings and alarms sounded by the apostles

of God to awaken us from the slumber, our neglect and our wretchedness only grew .day by day

The Punishment Of The Grave

According to the ulama, the punishment of the grave and the darkness therein is one of the evil consequences of this vice. They maintain that the bearer of this vice, with its associated spiritual tension and gloom, is oppressed by pressure and darkness in the grave and in Barzakh. One's condition in the grave depends upon the .spaciousness of the hearts and the narrowness thereof

Imam al-Sadiq (A) is narrated to have said that the Prophet (S) went to attend the funeral of Sa'd. While seventy thousand angels accompanied the ceremonies, the Prophet (S) of God raised his head towards the heavens and said, "Does anyone face the squeeze (of the grave) as Sa'd faced?" The narrator of the tradition said to the Imam: "May I die for your sake, we have been told that Sa'd was not very particular of taharah while passing urine." The Imam said, "God forbid, his only fault was that he '...:was harsh in his treatment of the people of his household

The state of darkness, narrowness, tension and constriction that appears in one's heart due to this vice is not likely to occur in other moral vices. In any case, the person possessing this vicious trait suffers torments in this life, then the oppressive darkness and constriction in the grave, and will ultimately be helpless and wretched in the ,Hereafter. All these are the evil effects of envy alone

on condition that it does not breed any other vice or induce any other evil deed. But it rarely happens that it does not generate some other affliction. Rather, it often begets many other moral vices and misdeeds, such as pride, as mentioned earlier, and other sins like backbiting, slandering, abusing, and torturing, etc., each one of which is a .deadly and mortal sin

Therefore, it is necessary for a wise person to make up his mind immediately and strive to get rid of this shame and indignity, saving his faith from the blaze of this fire and its disaster lie should rid himself of this mental torture and narrow-mindedness, which is it perpetual lifelong punishment in this world, followed by distress and darkness in the grave and the Purgatory, and incurs Divine wrath. One should consider that a malady, which has so many, harms needs to be treated urgently. His envy does not harm the person of whom he is envious. It does not make him lose any of the favors and merits either. It may even give him some satisfaction, in this world as well as in the other, to see the distress of one who is jealous of him and is his .enemy

While he continues to enjoy all those advantages, which cause you distress and anguish, it is yet another gift for him. And if you are again jealous of him for the second one, it will multiply your torment and anguish, which will again be a

blessing for him, and so on. Hence you shall ever remain in grief, pain, and anguish and he in a state of bliss, joy, and exuberance. In the Hereafter, also, your envy will benefit him, especially if it culminates in backbiting, slandering, and other such acts of malice; as your good deeds will be assigned to him. You will be reduced to utter destitution and he will enjoy bounties and eminence. If you deliberate upon the matter for a while, you shall of course purge yourself from this vice and save your soul .from its destructive effects

Don't think that psychic, moral, and spiritual vices are not curable; this is an erroneous notion that has been inspired in you by Satan and your carnal self, who want to keep you from treading the path of the Hereafter and to frustrate your efforts at rectifying your self. As long as man exists in this realm of transition and change, it is possible for .him to transform all his attributes and moral characteristics

However strong his habits may be, as long as he is living in this world he can quit them. The only thing is that the effort required to throw them off varies with the degree of their strength and intensity. A bad habit in the early phase of its formation, of course, requires only a little self-discipline and effort to eradicate it. It is like .uprooting a young plant that has not run its roots deeply into the ground

But when a quality becomes firmly rooted in one's nature, becoming a part of one's spiritual makeup, it is not easily uprooted, but requires much effort, like the tree that becomes old in age, having sent down its roots deep into the earth; it cannot be easily extirpated. The more you delay the decision to eradicate the iniquities of the heart, .the more time and effort it will require

My dear, in the first place do not allow any moral vice, bad habit or evil deed to enter the realm of your inner and outer being. This task is much easier than that of expelling them after they enter, establish themselves, and start flourishing. And if they enter, the more you delay the action required to expel them, the more time and effort will it .require, and they will corrupt your inner faculties in the mean time

Our great Shaykh, the accomplished 'arif Shahabadi-my soul be sacrificed for him—used to say that it is better to take an action against moral vices when one's youth and its powers and vivacity are still there. At that stage one can fulfill one's responsibilities as a human being in a better way. One should not allow oneself to delay until one's powers have departed; as it becomes more difficult to achieve success in this regard when old age sets in. Even if, presumably, one succeeds, the .effort required for the reform is, in comparison, much greater

Therefore, if a wise person considers the evil effects

of anything and realizes that he is not afflicted by it, he does not involve himself in it and does not allow it to contaminate him; and if, God forbid, he is afflicted he tries to get rid of it and correct himself as soon as possible, not allowing it to strengthen its roots. If, God forbid, it has taken roots, he makes every effort to root it out so as to avoid its evil consequences in the Purgatory and the Hereafter. If he is transferred in the state of affliction from this world of material change, he will no longer be able to do anything about it. Woe to the man who is such, for it will take ages of the Barzakh .and the Hereafter to transform a single moral characteristic

In a tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has been reported to have said that every inhabitant of Paradise or Hell is consigned to it eternally on account of his or her intentions and aims. Bad intentions, which result from evil morals, cannot be shed unless their source and origin is destroyed. In that world human qualities will manifest themselves with such an intensity and power that either it is not possible for them to perish at all-in which case one is lodged eternally in the Hell—or it is possible to purge them only through torment, distress, and flames—in which case it will take a time of .several centuries of the Hereafter

Therefore, O wise man, do not allow a

vice which can be removed by little effort of a month or a year or two, and whose removal is fully within your capacity and means, to linger on and cause the distresses .of this world and the Hereafter and ultimately destroy you

The Source Of Moral Corruption

It was mentioned earlier that faith, which is the joy and fortune of the soul, is different from knowledge, which is the pleasure and satisfaction of the intellect. All moral and behavioral corruptions ensue from the absence of faith in one's heart i.e. whatever the intellect and reason have comprehended through rational proofs or the reports of .the prophets fails to enter the heart, and the heart is unaware of their truth

One of the doctrines which every 'arif, Hakim, mutakallim, as well as the laity and the legists, affirm and regard as indubitable is that whatever has come into existence as the result of the stroke of the Pen of the absolutely Wise Creator, from the viewpoint of being and perfection to the apportioning of the means of sustenance among creatures and the ordination of their terms of life---everything demonstrates the utmost beauty of design and the utmost perfection of a system which is in complete accordance with the sumum bonum of the creatures and the most complete and .perfect system imaginable

However, each one of them describes this graciousness of God and His absolute wisdom in his own specific language and in accordance with the terminology of his discipline. The 'arif says, "It is the shadow of

the Absolute Beauty." The Hakim says, "The system of the real world is in accordance with a scientific scheme free from any defect and evil; that which is presumed to be evil in particular instances is nothing but a means for the creatures to acquire their deserved degree of perfection." The mutakallim and the legist believe that God's Acts are based upon wisdom and the general good, and man's limited intellect is incapable .of comprehending the higher good intrinsic in Divine ordainments

All subscribe to this idea and everyone sets forth an argument to prove it according to his own knowledge and intelligence. But since they do not go beyond words and have not entered the heart, voices of protest and objection can still be heard, and yet the same man, not enjoying the bounty of faith, counters his own words and confutes his .own arguments. Moral vices, too, are rooted in this weakness of faith

The one who feels jealous of others and desires for the loss of a good enjoyed by another and harbors spite against those who possess it in his heart, should know that he does not believe that it is in his own interest that God Almighty has not bestowed upon him that favor. Our limited understanding fails to comprehend the wisdom of His determinations. He should realize that he does not have faith in Divine Justice and the .justness of His apportioning

.Verbally he may declare his belief in the doctrine of Divine Justice

But his declaration is mere words; for the belief in the justness of God is contrary to envy. If you deem Him just, then consider His ordainment to be just too, for the hadith says expressly that the envious man is resentful at God's apportioning of gifts among His creatures and indignant at the favors conferred by Him. In accordance with the Divine instincts inherent in him, man by nature is a lover of justice. Modesty and reverence before justice and hatred and rebellion before injustice are rooted in his nature. However, if an opposite attitude is observed, it is because of a defect in his .premises

If he is indignant at the advantages enjoyed by others and is contentious about the Divine apportioning of bounties, it is on account of the fact that lie does not consider it as just, but, God forbid, regards it as unjust and cruel. It is not because he considers the Divine apportioning as just and is yet resentful of it. It is not that he considers the Divine plan to be a perfect system and absolutely good and yet is displeased with it. Alas, our faith is not complete and the intellectual proofs have not crossed the limits of reason and intellect to enter the realm of the heart. Faith is not [solely] a matter of utterance. It is not mere reading, discussing, or quoting others; it requires sincerity of intention. One who seeks God succeeds in finding Him. Those who are interested

:in Divine knowledge, seek it

(وَمَنْ كَانَ فِی هَذِهِ أَعْمَی فَهُوَ فِی الْآخِرَهِ أَعْمَی وَأَضَلُّ سَبِیلًا.)

(Whoso is blind here will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further front the road. (۱۷:۷۲

(وَمَنْ لَمْ یَجْعَلْ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ.)

(And he for whom Allah hath not appointed light, for him there is no light. (۲۴:۴۰

The Practical Remedy For Envy

Besides the theoretical cure that has been mentioned above, there is a practical remedy also for this hideous vice. It consists of this: Try, forcibly, to be affectionate with the person of whom you are jealous. By making a display of your affection, your purpose should be to cure yourself of this internal malady. Your inner self will ask you to hurt him and malign him. It will demand that you treat him like an enemy and recount to you his vices and mistakes. But you act against the inclinations of your self and be friendly with him. honor him and respect him and force yourself to speak in his praise. Try to see his virtues yourself and make them known to others too, .concentrating upon his good qualities

Though your behavior will be affected and unnatural in the beginning, being artificial and feigned, but since your aim is self-rectification and curing of this vice, your behavior will gradually become less artificial. Day by day this affectation will be lessened and your self will become accustomed to it and that which was affectation will become reality. You convince your self and make it understand that he

is a creature of God; perhaps it is God's grace, which has selected him for the .advantage that he enjoys

If the object of your envy is a scholar endowed with knowledge and piety, and you are jealous of him due to these merits, your envy is all the more abominable and this enmity will bring you greater harm in the Hereafter. It is for you to make your self understand that they are chosen servants of God, who, through Divine grace, have .been distinguished by that great merit and favor

Such a gift ought to make one feel affectionate and kindly towards its possessors, inclining one to respect them and to be humble towards them. Hence, if one perceives that anything that should stir up love and respect in his heart is causing something that is contrary to it, he should know that the baser emotions have overpowered him and their darkness has conquered his inner self. Now it is time for him to positively .resolve to get rid of it by all theoretical and practical means

If he tries to stimulate the feelings of love and friendship in his heart, he will succeed soon, since the light of love conquers the darkness of hatred. God Almighty has promised that He will guide those who struggle and help them through His invisible :grace and increase their capacities

إِنَّهُ وَلِيُّ التَّوْفِيقِ وَالهِدَايَهِ.

'.Indeed He possesses the authority to grant ability and to guide'

The Tradition Regarding Remission Of Envy

In some of the holy traditions, it has been

reported from the Prophet (S) that he enumerated nine things from which his Ummah have been granted remission; hasad, in case it is not expressed in one's words or deeds, is one of them. This tradition, and others similar to it, should not, of course, prevent one from seriously uprooting the vicious tree of envy from the self and freeing the soul from this faith- consuming fire. Because, it rarely happens that this vicious thing enters the soul without breeding diverse abominations there, without its .signs becoming visible, and without harming one's faith

It is mentioned in sahih ahadith that envy devours faith and is baleful to it, and that God Almighty disowns the envious person and would have nothing to do with him. Therefore, a thing, which is a major source of corruption and endangers all that matters to a human being should not be taken lightly due to misunderstanding the .Prophetic hadith about remission of the sin of hasad

Therefore, it is for you to take the matter seriously and snip off its branches and try to rectify yourself. Do not allow its venom to spill over in your outward behavior, as it will weaken its roots and stop its growth. And if you die during this period of spiritual reform and struggle, you will be blessed with Divine Mercy. With His infinite mercy and the boon provided by the spiritual station of the interceding Holy Prophet (S), you will be granted forgiveness. The spark of Divine beneficence will

.burn up any remaining traces of it, and the soul will be purged and purified

:As to the following tradition narrated by Hamzah ibn Humran

عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: ثَلاثَهٌ لَمْ يُنَجَّ مِنْهَا نَبِيٌّ فَمَنْ دُونَهُ: التَّفَكُّرُ فِى الوَسْوَسَهِ فِى الخَلْقِ وَالطِّيَرَهُ وَالحَسَدُ، إلا أَنَّ المُؤْمِنَ لا يَسْتَعْمِلُ هَذَا (الحَسَدَ).

Abu ‘Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) said, “There are three things from which neither any prophet nor others below his rank are Immune: doubts about the creation, anticipation of misfortune for others, and envy, although a believer does never make (use of them.”(1)

Either the statement is hyperbolic, the intention being that these form the most frequent basis of their tribulations, without their being actually subject to these vices; or hasad is used here to connote ghibtah (envy which is free of ill will); or what is meant is the inclination to wish for the loss of some of the advantages enjoyed by infidels who propagate false beliefs. Otherwise, the prophets of God and the saints .are free from any taint of hasad in the real sense of the word

A heart, which is defiled with moral evils and inner impurities, cannot receive Divine inspiration and revelation. Such a heart does not become a mirror of the light of Divine Attributes and the radiance of the Essence. Therefore, this tradition ought to be interpreted in the manner indicated above or in some other fashion, or it should be :(referred back to its speaker (S

وَالحَمْدُ للهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

And Praise is God’s, in the

.’Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, Bab ‘al- amr bi al-ma’ruf -۱

.beginning and the end

Sixth Hadith: Love Of The World

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ وَعَبْدِ العَزِيزِ العَبْدِيِّ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ أَبِي يَعْفُورَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَأَمْسَى وَالدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرُ هَمِّهِ جَعَلَ اللهُ تَعَالَى الفَقْرَ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَشَتَّتَ أَمْرَهُ وَلَمْ يَنَلْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلا مَا قَسَمَ اللهُ لَهُ. وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَأَمْسَى وَالآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ هَمِّهِ جَعَلَ اللهُ الغِنَى فِي قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ لَهُ أَمْرَهُ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ibn Mahbub, from 'Abd Allah ibn Sinan and 'Abd al-Aziz al-Abdi from 'Abd Allah ibn Abi Ya'fur, who report Abu Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) to have said, "One who passes his evenings and mornings in such a way that the world be his biggest concern, God ordains poverty between his two eyes and causes his affairs to become disjointed and dissipated, while he does not attain anything except what has been apportioned for him. And as for one who passes his evenings and mornings while his biggest concern and goal be the Hereafter, God puts contentment to his heart and gives a wholeness and unity to his affairs."(1)

Exposition Of The Tradition

There are various interpretations of the terms 'the world' and 'the Hereafter' according to different views offered by mystics and scholars. Here, our objective is not to plunge into any involved discussion about hair-splitting definitions, an .absorption, which keeps the wayfarer from proceeding towards his goal

What is essential here is to understand

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۱ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. IV (Arabic text with Persian translation by .Sayyid Hashim Rasuli), p. ۸

the meaning of 'the disapproved world' (i.e. 'the world' in the sense in which it is necessary for the person seeking the Hereafter to shun it) and the factors that assist man and guide him on the path of salvation. These we shall discuss, God willing, in a .few sections, and implore His help and guidance in this regard

Mawlana Majlisi On The Reality Of The World

The great researcher and peerless traditionist Mawlana Majlisi (M)(۱) states: "Let it be known to you that that which can be deduced from all the verses of the Quran and the traditions in this regard, according to our understanding of them, is that 'the accursed world' is the sum total of all those things that prevent man from obeying God and .keep him from His love and from seeking the Hereafter

Therefore 'the world' and 'the Hereafter' are antithetical to each other: whatever causes His good pleasure and one's nearness to Him belongs to 'the Hereafter,' even though apparently it should seem to be a matter of the world-such as the trade, the agriculture, the industry and the crafts whose purpose is to provide subsistence for one's family for the sake of obedience to God's command, for spending one's income for charitable purposes and the welfare of the poor and needy, and to avoid .dependence on others and beseeching their help

All these activities are meant for the Hereafter, though people should consider them to be for the sake of the world. On the other hand, heretical exercises in spiritual self-discipline, sanctimonious

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۱ - For maintaining readability, (M) which is an acronym for "Rahimahu(m) allah" is used throughout the book to denote "May God have mercy upon him/them".

deeds and the like, though they might be performed with great devotion and care, are meant for the world, as they cause alienation from God and do not bring man near to Him. Such are the deeds and the practices of the infidels and those who oppose the (right path."(1)

Another researcher remarks: "Your 'world' and 'Hereafter' are two inner states of your heart: that which is nearer and is concerned with the life before death is 'the world', and whatever that follows it and is concerned with the life after death is 'the Hereafter'. Therefore, everything that earns you pleasure and joy and provokes your ".lust before death, it is 'the world' for you

The Author's View

This pauper says: 'the world' may sometimes be regarded as meaning the lowest level of existence and the abode of change, transition, and annihilation. 'The Hereafter' signifies return from this lower mode of existence to the higher, celestial plane, one's inner world, which is the abode of permanence, stability, and eternity. These two worlds exist for every individual. The first one is the terrestrial realm of development and emergence, which is the lower plane of observable worldly existence. The other is the hidden, inward, and celestial level of existence, which is the .higher plane of being of the Hereafter

Although worldly existence is a lower and defective realm of being, but since it is a nursery for the training of lofty souls and a school for acquiring higher spiritual stations, it is a field for cultivating the

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.Al-Majlisi, Bihar al- anwar -۱

Hereafter. In this sense it is the most sublime of the realms of being and the most profitable of worlds for the lovers of God and the wayfarers of the path of the Hereafter. And were it not for this terrestrial realm of matter, the domain of physical and spiritual substantial transformation and change, and if God Almighty had not made it a realm of transition and annihilation, not a single imperfect soul would have attained its promised state of perfection nor would it have been able to reach the realm of permanence and stability, nor the embodiments of imperfection would have .been able to enter the Kingdom of God

Accordingly, that which is mentioned in the Quran and tradition regarding the disapproval of 'the world' does not actually apply to the world itself, but is meant to refer to absorption in it and love and attachment for it. This shows that man has two .'worlds' one of them is condemned, while the other is extolled and praised

The world, which is approved, is that which one acquires in this earthly abode, this school, and this marketplace, where higher stations and lasting spiritual merits are exchanged for transitory goods and where arrangements are made for the abiding abode. These cannot be possibly acquired without entering this world, as has been stated by the Mawla of the Muwahhidun, Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Ali (A), in one of his :'sermons delivered on hearing a person abuse 'the world

إِنَّ الدُّنْيا دَارُ صِدْقٍ لِمَنْ صَدَقَهَا وَدَارُ عَافِيَةٍ

لِمَنْ فَهِمَ عَنْهَا وَدَارُ غِنىً لِمَنْ تَزَوَّدَ مِنْهَا وَدَارُ مَوْعِظَةٍ لِمَنِ اتَّعَظَ بِهَا. مَسْجِدُ أَحِبَّاءِ اللهِ وَمُصَلَّى مَلائِكَهِ اللهِ وَمَهْبِطُ وَحْيِ اللهِ وَمَتْجِرُ أَوْلِيَاءِ اللهِ: إِكْتَسَبُوا فِيهَا الرَّحْمَهَ وَرَبِحُوا فِيهَا الجَنَّهَ.

Indeed this world is the abode of truth for him who appreciates its truthfulness, a place of safety for him who understands it, a mine of treasures for him who collects provisions from it [for the next world], and a house of instructions for him who draws lessons from it. It is the shrine of worship for those who love Allah, the house of prayer for His angels, the place where the revelations of Allah descend, and the marketplace for those devoted to Him. Herein they earn His mercy and herein they acquire Paradise by way of profit.(١)

What a good abode is the house of the pious—— (وَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ), God Almighty's words relate to the world, according to the interpretation of Imam al-Baqir (A) reported in a tradition by al-Ayyashi. Therefore, this world, being as it is the manifestation of and witness to His Beauty and Majesty, is not at all condemnable in this sense. That which is condemnable is the world of man himself in the sense of his absorption in the world of carnal nature and his attachment and love for it. That world is the source of all vices and all inward and outward sins, as reported in al-Kafi from Imam al-Sadiq (A):

قَالَ الإمَامُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السّلامُ: رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَهٍ حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا.

(Imam al Sadiq (A

١- Nahj al-balaghah (e.d. Subhi al-Salih), Hikam, No. ١٣١.

(said, “The love of the world is the source of all transgressions.”(1

:And it has been reported from Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said

مَا ذِئْبَانِ ضَارِيَانِ فِى غَنَمٍ قَدْ فَارَقَهَا رِعَاؤُها: أَحَدُهُمَا فِى أَوَّلِهَا وَالآخِرُ فِى آخِرِهَا، بِأَفْسَدَ فِيهَا مِنْ حُبِّ المَالِ. وَالشَّرَفُ فِى دِينِ المُسْلِمِ.

The harm done by two ferocious wolves, one attacking from the front and the other from the rear, to a herd without a shepherd, is less rapid than the one done by the (love of the world to the faith of the faithful.(2

Therefore, the attachment of the heart and the love of the world is synonymous with the accursed world, and the greater the attachment, the thicker the veils between man and the realms of sublimity, and denser the curtain between the heart of the human being and its Creator. It occurs in some ahadith that there are seventy thousand veils of light and darkness between God and His creatures. The veils of darkness may be no other than the attachments of the heart to this world, and the deeper they are, the greater the number of the veils and greater the difficulty of their .removal

Factors That Promote Worldliness

Man is the child of this physical world, nature being his mother, and he the offspring of water and dust. The love for this world is implanted in his heart since the early time of his development and growth. As he grows this love also increases. On account of the faculties of desire and the organs of deriving pleasure that have

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Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p. ۲ -۱

.Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p.۳ -۲

been granted to him by God Almighty for the sake of the preservation of individual and species, this love grows day by day.

Since he considers this world as a place of pleasure and luxury, and death as the end of these activities, even if he is led to believe in the Hereafter, its states, conditions, and rewards by the arguments of the hukama' or the traditions of the prophets (A), yet his heart remains unfamiliar with them and does not accept them, let alone obtaining certainty of their reality.

Due to these reasons, his love for this world and his attachment to it increase considerably. Since man naturally loves immortality, detests and evades decline and annihilation, and mistakes death for annihilation, even if his reason were to confirm this world as the house of transition and annihilation and that world as eternal and everlasting, his heart does not accept the findings of his reason if they have not entered the heart itself.

The main thing is that the belief should have entered the heart and the best state is that of complete certainty. It is for this reason that Ibrahim Khalil Allah (A) asked God to bestow upon him certainty, and that was granted to him. Therefore, as the hearts do not have faith in the Hereafter-like those of ours-though rationally we may posit its existence, they desire to remain in this world and are averse to the thought of dying and quitting this lower mode of existence.

But

if our hearts become aware of the fact that this world is the lowest of the worlds and the house of decline and change and the realm of imperfection and destruction, and that there are other realms beyond death each of which is eternal and stable, perfect and permanent, where life is bliss and beatitude, our hearts would naturally acquire the love of that world and would abhor this world. And if one were to rise above this world and awake to the realities of that world, and observe the real inward form of this world and the attachment to it, this world will become unbearable for him. He will detest it, desire to leave this abode of darkness and to get rid of the shackles of time and transition, an attitude which is apparent in the words of the awliya'.

Imam 'Ali (A), the Mawla of the awliya', said:

وَاللهِ، لابْنُ أَبِى طَالِبٍ آنَسُ بِالمَوْتِ مِنَ الطِّفْلِ بِثَدْىِ أُمِّهِ.

By God, the son of Abu Talib is more intimate with death than an infant with its mother's bosom.

(١)

That great soul had considered the reality of this world from the viewpoint of Wilayah, and had chosen the blessed vicinity of the Most High. And were it not for the sake of the higher goals, those pure and chaste souls would not have tarried in this murky and gloomy gathering even for a single moment. To inhabit this phenomenal world of plurality, to meditate upon the worldly affairs, even with the spiritual favors, is

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١- Nahj al- balaghah, Khutab, No. ٥.

a matter of great pain and sorrow for those absorbed in the love of God, a sorrow .which we cannot even imagine

Their lamentations, as reflected in their prayers and supplications, were on account of the pain of separation from the Beloved and His magnanimous vicinity, although there were no mundane or spiritual veils for them, and they had left behind them the subdued hell of nature and its attachments, their hearts being free of the defilements of physical nature. Nevertheless, the very presence in the confines of physical nature and the inevitable pleasures associated with it, even if they be very few, acts like a :veil. It is on this account that the Holy Prophet (S) is quoted to have said

لَيُغَانُ عَلَى قَلْبِى، وَإِنِّى لأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ فِى كُلِّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

Lest my heart should be covered by [the veils of] lust, I ask God's forgiveness seventy .times a day

Perhaps the fault of Adam (A), the father of mankind, was the result of this innate attraction towards physical nature, symbolized by the wheat, and his attention to the mundane aspect of life-something which is considered wrong by the awliya' and the lovers of God. If Adam (A) had remained faithful to the divine passion and had not set foot into the domain of the mundane, this entire toilsome tale, winding through the .world to the Hereafter, would not have assumed such proportions

Let it be known to you that each and every pleasure that man derives from this world leaves its

trace on his heart that is indicative of its susceptibility to the physical world and a cause of its further attachment to the world. The more the enjoyments and the pleasures, the greater their impression upon the heart and the more intense its attachment to the world and love for it. This process continues until the heart .completely yields to the world and its allurements

Such a condition is the source of a great many evils. All the human transgressions, sins, and moral vices are on account of this love and attachment, as mentioned in the hadith quoted from al-Kafi. One of the greatest evils of this love, according to our Shaykh-my soul be sacrificed for him - is that if the love of the world captures the human heart and the attachments become strong, at the time of death man finds that God Almighty is separating him from his beloved and causing separation between him and the darling of his desire. As a result, he leaves the world in a state of indignation .and rancor against Him

This greatly shocking warning is enough to awaken man, that he should be extremely cautious in guarding his heart. God forbid, lest one should be indignant with the real King of kings, the Bestower of favors and the Nourisher, for none except God knows .the ugly form of such a rancor and resentment

Our honored Shaykh also related of his father that he was extremely disturbed during the last years of his life

p: ۲۵۲

regarding his love for one of his sons. But after doing exercises in spiritual self-discipline for some time he was relieved of this attachment. He was greatly satisfied on this account before he retired to the abode of eternal bliss. May God be pleased with him.

There is a tradition in al-Kafi, reported on the authority of Talhah ibn Zayd, from Abu 'Abd Allah Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said:

مَثَلُ الدُّنْيا كَمَثَلِ مَاءِ البَحْرِ؛ كُلَّمَا شَرِبَ مِنْهُ العَطْشَانُ ازْدَادَ عَطَشاً حَتَّى يَقْتُلَهُ.

The example of the world is that of sea water; the more a thirsty person drinks from it, the thirstier he becomes until it kills him.(١)

The love of the world destroys man eternally, and it is the source of his affliction with inward and outward villainies.

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

The Dirham and the Dinar have destroyed many a people before you and they will destroy you too.

Even if a person is not, supposedly, afflicted by other vices, which is improbable or rather impossible, the sole attachment to the world is sufficient to cause many an affliction. The criterion of the length of the period of detention in the world beyond the grave and the Barzakh is the amount of intensity of these associations and attachments.

The lesser they are, the more spacious and brighter his place in the grave and the Barzakh, and consequently the lesser the period of one's detention therein. Hence the awliya', according to some traditions, do not have to experience

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١- Usul al-Kafi, vol. iii, p. ٢٠٥.

the conditions of the grave for more than three days, and that too for the sake of the .inherent and natural attachment that they had in the life of this world

Among the evil effects of the love of the world and attachment to it is that it makes man afraid of death. The fear of death, being the product of the love of the world and attachment to it, is highly objectionable; it is different from the fear of the Day of Resurrection, which is one of the attributes of true believers. The greater part of the sufferings and pangs experienced by a dying man are on account of the severance of .the worldly ties, not the fear of death itself

A brilliant researcher and a judicious analyzer of the world of Islam, Mir Damad-:karrama Allah wajhah in his al-Qabasat, a book of rare excellence, writes

لا تَخافَنَّکَ المَوْتُ، فَإنَّ مَرارَتَهُ فِی خَوْفِهِ.

(Death itself will never frighten you; its bitterness lies in being afraid of it.(۱)

Another great evil caused by the love of the world is that it keeps man from religious exercises, devotional rites, and prayers, and strengthens his physical nature. It inculcates disobedience within his physical nature to the commands of his spirit. As a result it weakens his power of resolution and debilitates the will, whereas one of the main secrets and aims of worship and religious exercises is to make the body, the physical faculties, and the natural instincts subordinate to the spirit, so that the will may

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۱- Mir Damad, al-Qabasat, p. ۷۲.

control them and force the body to act according to its wishes and prevent it from .whatever the spirit wants it to abstain from

If the spirit dominates the body, the domain of the body and the physical faculties is brought under the control of the spirit in a way that everything it wishes the body to perform would be performed without the slightest hardship and hindrance. One of the virtues and secrets of austere worships and laborious devotional exercises is that .they are more conducive to the attainment of this goal

Through them man can-acquire a strong will and resolution, and overcome his physical nature. If the will becomes complete and perfect and the resolution strong and powerful, the domain of the human body and its external and internal faculties acquires angelic characteristics, and he becomes similar to the angels of God who never transgress Divine commands, obey readily, without any resistance or compulsion, whatever He orders them to do, and refrain from doing whatever they are forbidden from. If the physical faculties of man come under the domination of his spirit, all hardships and hindrances disappear and a state of ease and tranquility prevails. When that happens, the ‘seven realms’ of physical nature will become .subservient to the heavenly forces, and all the faculties will act as their functionaries

Therefore, my dear, the strength of will power and resolution is very important and effective in that world. In fact, the strength of will is the criterion of entry into

one of the levels of Paradise, which is one of the highest heavens. Unless one possesses a strong will and powerful resolution he cannot gain that heaven and that high station. It is reported in a tradition that when the virtuous are stationed in Paradise, a message will be sent to them from the Holy God, saying, "This is the message sent by the Eternal and the Immortal to the one who is also eternal and :immortal

Whatever I command to be, it comes into existence; today I bestow on you authority to command whatever you desire to bring into existence and it would come into existence." You can see what a great authority and distinction that would be. What sort of power they have whose resolution and will shall be the manifestation of the Divine Will so that they will be able to grant the apparel of existence to non-existents. It shows that the power of will and resolution is superior to all the physical faculties. And it is also obvious that this message will not be sent out of extravagance and without proper Judgment. Those whose will is subordinated to their bestial desires and whose resolution has become dead and inert, they cannot attain this station. The .Almighty's Acts are free from extravagance and vain indulgence

In this world everything is based on a system in which all means and ends are arranged according to an order. In that world, too, all matters will be arranged in a

similar manner, or rather that world represents the highest harmony between causes and effects, means and ends. The power and authority of the will is to be cultivated in this world. This world is the sowing ground of the Hereafter; it is the substance out of .which the rewards of heaven as well as the misfortunes of hell are carved out

Therefore, each one of the worships and the rites prescribed by the Shari'ah, besides themselves possessing heavenly and angelic forms, are elements for building the physical paradise and procuring all the paraphernalia of heavenly life. This is confirmed by tradition and affirmed by reason. In the same way as every worship produces its own specific effects on the soul, it also, little by little, strengthens the will and perfects its strength. Therefore, the greater the effort required for a worship, the more productive it is

أَفْضَلُ الأَعْمَالِ أَحْمَزُهَا.

(The best of deeds are those, which are the most difficult.(١

For instance, waking up for the sake of praying to God Almighty in the biting cold of a winter night and sacrificing the delights of sound sleep makes the soul triumphant over the body and strengthens the will. Though it is a bit difficult and unpleasant in the beginning, but after a little practice its hardship and inconvenience becomes lesser .and lesser and the subservience of the body to the soul grows

We see the people who perform it doing all this without any trouble, and if we are lazy ,and find it difficult

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p. ٩ -١

it is because we do not take action. But if we force ourselves to act, gradually the difficulty turns into ease. The people who offer the nightly prayer derive great enjoyment out of it, even more than the pleasure we derive from carnal enjoyments. The self becomes habituated through action, and goodness becomes enduring by .becoming habitual

These worships have several advantages, one of them is that the form that they acquire in that world is so beautiful that its parallel cannot be found in this world, and we are unable to visualize it. Another is that the soul acquires will power and resolution, which by itself has numerous advantages, and we have mentioned one of .them

Yet another is that it familiarizes man with the worship and remembrance of God, bringing the unreal to the Real, and turning the heart towards the King of kings, stirring in it the love for the Beauty of the Real Beloved, and diminishing the .attachment to and concern for the world and the Hereafter

Perhaps, if this divine passion is produced and a state is achieved in which he knows the real objective of worship and the real secret of meditation and remembrance, both the worlds would lose their significance for him; the vision of the Beloved wipes out the dust of duality from the mirror of the heart, and God alone knows how .magnanimously He will treat such a devotee

Therefore, the practice of the exercises prescribed by the Shari'ah, the worships and

the rites, and abstention from carnal desires and lusts, strengthen the human will power and resolution. On the other hand, immersion in sinful physical nature weakens .human resolution and will, as mentioned earlier

It is known to every man of conscience that man is drawn towards Absolute Perfection in accordance with his nature and inherent disposition. The better part of his heart is attracted towards Absolute Beauty and the Most Perfect in all aspects. This characteristic of man is innate in his nature and ingrained in it by God Almighty. Accordingly, the will is a means for the fulfillment of the search of the lovers of .Absolute Beauty

However, everyone, in accordance with his own state and condition, has his own idea of perfection, and he sees perfection in something towards which he is attracted. Those who work for the sake of the Hereafter perceive perfection in otherworldly stages and grades and their hearts are turned towards them. And the men of God, :who, beholding perfection in His beauty and beauty in His perfection, say

(إِنِّی وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِی لِلَّذِی فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ.)

(I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth. (۶:۷۹

:And they say

وَلِی مَعَ اللهِ حَالٌ.

.My ecstasy lies in God

They long for union with Him, and are in love with His Beauty. The worldlings, since they perceive perfection in worldly comforts and luxuries, those things having acquired beauty in their sight and charmed them, are naturally attracted towards them. Nevertheless, since man's natural inclination is towards absolute

.perfection, all the worldly attachments are basically errors of Judgment

Therefore, the greater his mastery over worldly or otherworldly benefits, whether they are spiritual accomplishments, authority, power, or material treasures, his longing for them increases and the flame of love grows brighter and more ferocious. For example, the sensual appetites of a lusty man will increase if he is given more chances of fulfilling his sensual desires; he will desire some other fulfillment that is not .available to him, and the furnace of his lust will become hotter and wilder

In the same way, if the man ambitious for power and authority is allowed to establish his authority over one region, he will turn towards yet another. If the whole earth comes under his domination, he will think of invading other spheres in order to bring them under his dominion. He is not aware that his natural instincts crave for something else. The instinctive love and the natural quest of man is directed towards the Absolute Beloved. All substantial, physical, and intentional motions, all attentions of the heart and the inclinations of the self are directed towards the beauty of .Absolute Beauty, yet human beings do not realize it

They abuse this love, this desire, and this longing, which is meant to be the Buraq (the mount upon which the Prophet (S) is said to have performed the nocturnal journey through the universe called Mi'raj) meant for ascension to heaven, the wings to fly to union with the Absolute, by

wasting it on unworthy ends and by confining it within absurd barriers and limits, thus .missing their goal

In short, since man's inclination towards absolute perfection is innate, the greater his greed for worldly allurements the more he accumulates them and the more is his heart attracted towards them. Since he mistakenly believes the world and worldly fascinations to be the desired ultimate goal his greed grows day by day and his desire for them multiplies. His need for the world increases and poverty and deprivation .becomes his fate

On the contrary, those who work for the Hereafter, their attention towards the world diminishes, their attention towards the Hereafter increases with their interest therein, and the love for this world and the interest therein diminishes in their hearts till they care no more about the world and its allurements. A sense of richness and plentitude is lodged within their hearts and the treasures of this world lose their value in their sight. Therefore, the men of God are oblivious of both the worlds and free of care for both of them. Their only need is related to Absolute Plentitude. Absence of need and .presence of plentitude are infused in their hearts by the light of the Needless-in-Itself

In the light of the above exposition, the tradition means to say that whosoever makes the world his biggest concern from morning till night, God Almighty puts poverty into his eyes. And whosoever spends his morning and evening making the Hereafter his biggest concern, God

Almighty puts plentitude into his heart. It is obvious that the one whose heart attends to the, Hereafter, for him all the worldly matters become insignificant, trivial, and easy. ' He views the world as temporary, transitory; and short-lived, a place where he .is for the sole purpose of educating and training himself

He is indifferent to its sufferings and joys. His needs become few, and his dependence on the matters of the world and its inhabitants becomes lesser, and reaches a point where he has no need of them at all. His affairs become integrated and organized, .and an inalienable sense of contentment enters his heart

Therefore, the more you look at this world with wonder and love, the more your heart will be attached to it, and your need for it will also increase proportionally to your love. A sense of poverty and privation will appear on the surface of your personality, your affairs will become disjointed and dissipated. Your heart will become anxious, melancholic, and fearful, and your affairs will not be carried out according to your .wishes

Your hope and greed will increase day by day. Grief and regret will seize you; bewilderment and despair will invade your heart. Some of these points have been :alluded to in the following traditions from al-Kafi

عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ قُرْطٍ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ کَثُرَ اشْتِبَاکُهُ بِالدُّنْیَا کَانَ أَشَدَّ لِحَسْرَتِهِ عِنْدَ فِرَاقِهَا.

,On the authority of Hafs ibn Qurt, Abu 'Abd Allah (A) is reported to have said

The greater one's involvement with the world, the greater shall be his regret at the" time of parting from it"(1)

عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِی یَعْفُورَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ قَلْبُهُ بِالدُّنْیَا تَعَلَّقَ قَلْبُهُ بِثَلاثِ خِصَالٍ: هَمٌّ لا یَفْنَى وَأَمَلٍ لا یُدْرَکُ وَرَجَاءٍ لا یُنَالُ.

Ibn Abi Ya'fur says: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah as saying, "Whoever has a heart attached to the world, has three things attached to his heart: unremitting sadness, unfulfilled desire, and unachievable hope."(2)

But the otherworldly, the nearer they come to the Court of the Beneficent, the more joyful and tranquil their hearts become; they become oblivious, nay disgusted, of this world and whatever is in it. If the Almighty had not decreed their terms of life, they would not have tarried for a single moment in this world. The Mawla of the Muwahhidun, Imam 'Ali (A), says about them: "They are not sad and dejected here like the people of this world, and in the Hereafter they will be immersed in the oceans of His Mercy." May God include you and us with them, God willing.

So, my dear, now you know about the evils of this love and attachment, and have learnt how this love can destroy a human being. It deprives the human being of his' faith, and makes a mess of his life in the Hereafter as well as in this world. Make up your mind, and try to curtail your love and loosen the bondage to this world as far as

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p. ۹.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p. ۹

.possible. Eradicate its roots, and consider this short life in this world as insignificant

Do not attach any value to its pleasures, mixed as they are with punishment, sorrow, and pain. Seek help from God, so that He may succor you in relieving your self from its scourge and suffering, and familiarize your heart with the noble abode that lies with .Him. And whatever lies with God is better and lasting

(Seventh Hadith: Anger (Ghadhab

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ فَرْقَدٍ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: الغَضَبُ مِفْتَاحُ كُلِّ شَرٍّ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni), from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, ... from Yunus, from Dawud ibn Farqad, who reports al 'Imam al-Sadiq (A) to have said, ("Anger is the key (that opens the door) to all kinds of vices."(1

Exposition

The great researcher Ahmad ibn Muhammad, popularly known as Ibn Maskawayh, in his book Taharat al-'a'raq, which is a fine book of rare excellence in beauty of style and orderliness of contents, writes something which can be summarized as follows: Anger, in fact, is an inner psychic movement due to which a state of agitation is produced in the heart's blood, arousing a desire for vengeance. And when this .agitation becomes more violent, it intensifies the fire of anger

A violent commotion in the blood seizes the heart, filling the arteries and the brain with a flurry of dark smoke, on account of which the mind and the intellect lose

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۱ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by .Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۲

control and become powerless. At that time, as the hukama' maintain, the inner state of the person resembles a cave where fire has broken out, filling it with flames and suffocating clouds of smoke that leap out of its mouth with intense heat and a fiery .howl

When that happens, it becomes extremely difficult to pacify such a person and to extinguish the fire of his wrath; whatever is thrown in it to cool it down becomes a part of it, adding to its intensity. It is for this reason that such a man becomes blinded .to propriety and deaf to guidance. In such a condition, there is no hope for him

Then Ibn Maskawayh adds: "Hippocrates says that he is more hopeful about a ship encircled by a fierce storm and violent winds which has been knocked away from its course by the sea waves into rocky waters, than about an enraged person. Because, in such conditions, the sailors may somehow manage to save the ship by means of clever maneuvers, but there is no hope of deliverance for the soul engulfed in rage; for all such efforts as counsel, advice, and exhortation fail to appease him. The more one tries to pacify it through humble entreaties and tearful supplications, the more ".violent it becomes

(Advantages Of Al–Quwwah Al–Ghadabiyyah (The Power Of Anger

It should be known that the Power of Anger is one of the biggest favors of God conferred upon His creatures, by means of which they are enabled to pursue activities constructive to their world

and Hereafter, are assured the continuity of the species as well as, the safety and .survival of the individual and the family

It also plays a great role in the establishment and maintenance of social order and civic life.' If this noble faculty were not ingrained in the animal's nature, it would not have been able to defend itself against natural adversities, and would have been defenseless against the dangers of destruction and extinction. And if it were absent in the human nature, man would have failed to achieve most of his accomplishments .and attainments

Moreover, even its deficiency and insufficient presence below the moderate level is itself considered a moral weakness and flaw which gives rise to innumerable vices and defects like: fear; timidity; weakness; laxity; laziness; greed; lack of restraint, patience and tolerance; lack of constancy and perseverance when needed; love of comfort; torpor; lethargy; submissiveness to oppression and tyranny; submitting to insults and disgraces to which an individual or his family may be subjected; dastardliness; spiritlessness, etc. Describing the qualities of the believers God :Almighty says

(أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ.)

The believers) are hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves.) ((۴۸:۲۹

The fulfillment of the duty of al-'Amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar (to enjoin good conduct. and forbid indecency), the implementation of hudud (punishment prescribed by the Islamic penal law), ta'zirat (punishments adjudged by a judge), and the carrying out of other policies set forth by religion or guided by reason, would not have been possible

.without the existence of this noble Power of Anger

On this basis, those who believe in eradicating the Power of Anger and consider its destruction as an accomplishment and mark of perfection are highly mistaken and in great error, ignorant as they are about the signs of perfection and the bounds of .moderation

Poor fellows, they do not know that God Almighty has not created this noble faculty in vain in all the species belonging to the animal kingdom. To the children of Adam (A) He bestowed this power as the source of securing a good life in this world and the .Hereafter, and a vehicle for procuring various blessings and felicities

The holy jihad with the enemies of the Din; the struggle for the preservation of mankind's social order; the defense and protection of one's own life, property and honor, as well as the Divine values and laws; and above all the combat with one's inner self, which is the biggest enemy of man, none of these could be possible without .the existence of this noble faculty

It is under the banner of this noble faculty that aggressions and encroachments upon rights are repelled, borders and frontiers are protected, and other social and individual offences, noxious practices, and harmful deeds are checked. It is for this very reason that the hukama' have recommended various remedies for treating any deficiency in this Power, and prescribed numerous practical and theoretical remedies for the purpose of its regeneration, like participation in acts

.of heroism and going to battlefronts on the occasion of war with the enemies of God

It is even narrated of some sages that they used to visit risky places, stayed there and exposed themselves to great perils and dangers. They would board a ship at a time while the sea was turbulent and stormy, so that they might get rid of fear and .overcome their timidity and sluggishness

In any case, the Power of Anger is ingrained in the nature of human beings and animals, except that in some cases it is dormant and torpid, like a fire smouldering under the ashes. If someone perceives in himself any signs of torpor and lack of the sense of honor, he must try to overcome this condition by means of its antidote, courage, which is a commendable quality and a moral virtue, to return to a normal .state. We shall have occasion to refer to it again in due course

Vice Of Immoderation In Anger

In the same way as the deficiency and lack of moderation is considered a moral vice and source of numerous moral corruptions, the excess and going beyond the upper limits of moderation is also regarded, morally, as a vice and source of countless deviations. The tradition quoted in al-Kafi is sufficient to indicate the dangers of such :a state

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الغَضَبُ يُفْسِدُ الإيمَانَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الخَلُّ العَسَلَ.

It is reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Apostle of

(God (S) said, “Anger spoils faith in the same way as vinegar destroys honey.”(۱)

It may happen that someone gets angry and, in a bout of extreme anger, turns away from the Din of God. The hot flames and the dark fumes of anger not only destroy his faith by consuming his righteous beliefs, they also lead him to apostatize by rejecting God, thus leading him to eternal damnation. And when he becomes aware of it, his remorse is of no avail, as the fire of anger, which was lit by a spark thrown in by Satan, continues to roar in his heart, as Imam al-Baqir (A) has said:

إنَّ هَذَا الغَضَبَ جَمْرَةٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تُوقَدُ فِی قَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ.

(Indeed, this anger is the spark lit by Satan in the heart of the son of Adam.(۲)

In the next world, this fire will acquire the form of the fire of Divine Wrath, as reported from al-Baqir (A) in al-Kafi:

مَكْتُوبٌ فِی التَّوْرَاهِ فِی مَا نَاجَى اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا مُوسَى أَمْسِكْ غَضَبَکَ عَمَّنْ مَلَّكْتُکَ عَلَيْهِ أَكُفَّ عَنْکَ غَضَبِى.

It is recorded in the Torah regarding that which God Almighty confided to Moses (A), saying: “O Moses, control your anger towards those over whom I have given you authority, so that I may spare you from My Wrath.”(۳)

It must be known that no fire is more painful than the fire of Divine Wrath. It is mentioned in a tradition that Jesus, the son of Mary, was asked by his disciples as to

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۲.

۲- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵.

۳- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵.

which of the things is the hardest to bear. "The Fury of the Most High God is the hardest thing to bear," he replied. They questioned him, "How can we save ourselves from it?" "By not getting angry," Jesus said.

Therefore, it must be obvious that God's Wrath is more painful and severer than any thing else, and the fire of His Fury is most destructive. The Hereafterly form of our anger in this world is the fire of Divine Wrath in the next world. In the same way as anger emanates from the heart, perhaps the fire of Divine Wrath, which is the abode of our anger and all other inner vices, will also emanate from the inner depths of the heart and spread over the external being, and its tormenting flames will emerge from the external sense organs like the eyes, the ears, and the tongue.

Rather, the external senses are themselves the doors which shall be opened to the fire of Hell. The fire of the hell of deeds and the physical hell encompasses the without and travels towards the within. Hence man is tortured from both the sides by these two hells: one emanates from within the heart and its flames enter the body through pia mater of the brain, and the other, which is the result of the vicious deeds, advances towards the inner being from without, and man is subjected to torments and pressures.

What sort of torment and torture it will be? God alone knows

what pain and distress it will bring in addition to the burning and melting. You imagine that the topological mode of the Hell's encompassment is something that you know. Here things are surrounded only externally and outwardly; but in that world, encirclement will occur both externally and internally; it will cover the outer surface of .the body as well as the inner depths of the human heart and being

And if, God forbid, anger becomes permanent part of one's nature, it will be more catastrophic; for the form that such a one shall acquire in the Barzakh and on the Day of Resurrection will be a beastly form, that too one which has no match in this world; for the brutality of the person in this state cannot be compared with any of the ferocious beasts. In the same way-as none of the creatures can touch this marvel of nature from the aspect of attainment of nobility and perfection, so also from the aspect of his capacity for degeneration and meanness and his leaning towards perverseness, man cannot be compared with any creature. It is about his :perverseness that the Holy Quran says

(أُوْلَئِکَ کَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ.)

(These are as the cattle-nay, they are worse in misguidance. (۷:۱۷۹

:It is about the hardness of the human heart that it says

(فَهِیَ کَالْحِجَارَهِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَهً.)

(Then the hearts of the Jews) became hardened like stones, or even yet harder. (۲:۷۴)

All this that you have heard about the evil effects of this consuming fire of anger

is merely a fraction of its danger. It holds true in cases where no other vice and offence spring from it, that is, if this inner fire lies dormant in the inner darkness, having been choked and suffocated, although having extinguished the light of faith by .its dense smoke

However, it is very rare, or rather impossible, that in a fit of its intense conflagration one should remain immune from committing other, even mortal, sins. It happens that in a brief outburst of anger, this cursed firebrand thrown by the Devil, man falls over the precipice of destruction and doom. He may even, God be our refuge, abuse the prophets of God and saints, assassinate an innocent person, or desecrate something holy, thus bringing about his own destruction in the world as well as in the Hereafter, :as is mentioned in a hadith of al-Kafi

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فِی حَدِیثٍ: کَانَ أَبِی یَقُولُ: أَیُّ شَیْءٍ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الغَضَبِ؟ إنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَیَغْضَبُ فَیَقْتُلُ النَّفْسَ الَّتِی حَرَّمَ اللهُ وَیَقْذِفُ المُحْصَنَهَ.

It is reported from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said that his father used to say: "Is there anything more violent than anger? Verily, a man gets angry and kills someone whose (blood has been forbidden by God, or slanders a married woman."(۱

Many atrocious deeds have been committed under a spell of anger and its agitation. Therefore, one, while in a state of tranquility of mind, should be apprehensive of his own anger if he is in a habit of often getting

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by .Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵

angry. He should contemplate upon its cure, when in a state of mental composure, and think about its causes, its bad consequences and repercussions, and he should .strive to get rid of it

He should consider that a faculty which was granted by God Almighty for the sake of the preservation of the world's order, for the continuity and survival of human species and individual, for the discipline and order of the family system, for the advancement and progress of humankind, and for protecting human rights and safeguarding Divine laws, a faculty under whose shadow the visible as well as the invisible system of the visible world and the hidden world is to be reformed and maintained, if he acts contrary to this purpose and makes use of this power against the Divine design, it will .be a breach of trust of a severe kind that deserves censure and punishment

What an act of ignorance and injustice it is not to fulfill the Divine trust, by employing what could be easily employed for the purposes of justice in incurring His Wrath. It is clear that such a person will not be sheltered from the Divine Wrath. Hence it is in order to think seriously about the moral vices and vicious deeds that are the outcome of anger, and to try to remove the effects of this crooked quality, each one of which is capable of afflicting a person till eternity, causing many a calamity in this world as well as

.chastisement and damnation in the Hereafter

Moral Hazards Of Anger

As to the moral hazards, it may cause malice towards creatures of God, leading sometimes even to the enmity not only of prophets and awliya', but also of the Holy Essence of the Necessary Being and the Nourisher. This shows how dangerous and disgraceful its consequences may be. I seek refuge in God from the evil of the rebellious self, which, if left reinless for a moment, throws one down rolling in the dust of ignominy or dashes with him towards eternal damnation. It may also give rise to other vices, like hasad, about whose evils you have read in the exposition of the fifth .tradition, and many more besides it

Its Behavioral Hazards

There is no limit to the behavioral hazards that are products of this vice. Perhaps, it may lead one, God save us, to use abusive language or revile the prophets of God and awliya'. Or he may desecrate sanctities and utter slanders about venerable persons. He may murder a pious soul, wreck the lives of innocent creatures, wreck a family, or reveal the secrets of others tearing up the veils that cover them. There seems to be no limit to such monstrous acts that man may commit at the time of outbreak of this .faith-consuming fire that also destroys many homes

As such, it can be said that this habit is the mother of all spiritual maladies and the key to each and every evil action. As opposed to this vice is the ability to

restrain one’s anger. This ability to extinguish the fire of anger has been considered the essence of wisdom and the focus of all virtues and noble qualities, as stated in this :tradition of al-Kafi

عِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ النَّضْرِ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ، عَنِ القَاسِمِ بْنِ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبِى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: أَتَى رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ رَجُلٌ بَدَوِيٌّ فَقَالَ: إِنِّى أَسْكُنُ البَادِيَهَ، فَعَلِّمْنِى جَوامِعَ الكَلامِ. فَقَالَ: آمُرُكَ أَنْ لا تَغْضَبَ. فَأَعَادَ عَلَيْهِ الأَعْرَابِىُّ المَسْأَلَهَ ثَلاثَ مَرَّاتٍ حَتّى رَجَعَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: لا أَسْأَلُ عَنْ شَىْءٍ بَعْدَ هَذَا.مَا أَمَرَنِى رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِلا بِالخَيْرِ.

قَالَ: وَكَانَ أَبِى يَقُولُ: أَىُّ شَىْءٍ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الغَضَبِ؟ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَغْضَبُ فَيَقْتُلُ النَّفْسَ الَّتِى حَرَّمَ اللهُ وَيَقْذِفُ المُحْصَنَهَ.

Al-Kulayni says) From a number of our (i.e. al-Kulayni’s) companions, from Ahmad ibn) Muhammad ibn Khalid (al-Barqi), who narrates on the authority of a chain of narrators from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he heard his father (Imam al-Baqir [A]) as saying: “A Bedouin came to the Prophet (S) and said: ‘I live in the desert. Teach me the essence of wisdom.’ Thereupon the Prophet (S) said to him: ‘I command you not to get angry’ After repeating his question thrice (and hearing the same reply from the Prophet every time) the Bedouin said to himself: ‘After this I will not ask any question, since the Apostle of God (S) does not command anything but good’.” Imam al-Sadiq (A) says, “My father used

to say, ‘Is there anything more violent than anger? Verily, a man gets angry and kills someone whose blood has been forbidden by God, or slanders a married woman.”(۱)

After that a wise person coolly ponders upon its evil consequences and the benefits of restraint, he should make it incumbent upon himself to put out this fire in the region of his heart with every possible effort and to clear from his heart the black soot of its smoke. This is something which is not very difficult when one resolves to act against one’s inner self and its desires, after having reflected upon their evil effects and by admonishing one’s self. In fact, one may get rid of all moral evils and ugly spiritual traits and acquire all good qualities and excellences of character and soul whenever he resolves to improve his spiritual condition.

Controlling Anger

There are also several practical and theoretical remedies for curing anger when it has flared up. The theoretical remedy involves reflecting upon the matters mentioned above, which is also a kind of practical remedy in this case. But among the practical remedies the important ones involve withholding of the self in the initial stages of anger. This is because it is ignited little by little, becoming more intense until its furnace is set burning fiercely and its flame becomes violent and furious. When that happens, it gets completely out of control and shuts off the lights of one’s faith and intellect. Blowing off the lamp of guidance, it

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵.

.reduces man to an utterly wretched state

Therefore, one should be on one’s guard so as to dissociate oneself by some means before its fierceness mounts and its fire becomes more violent. He should either leave the place where his anger may be provoked, or change his posture: that is, if seated, he should stand up, and if standing sit down, or engage his mind in the remembrance of God (some people consider it even obligatory), or he should make himself busy in .some other activity to divert his attention

In any case, it is easier to put a curb on it in the beginning. It has two results. Firstly, he will be able to pacify his self at that early stage and the flames of anger will be put out. Secondly, the experience will always remain with one as a primary cure for treating one’s self. If one always pays attention to one’s condition and treats one’s self in this way, one will undergo a complete transformation as one’s inner state moves towards the point of moderation. An allusion to this matter is made in the :following traditions from al-Kafi

عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ هَـذَا الغَضَبَ جَمْرَةٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تُوقَـدُ فِى قَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ. وَإنَّ أَحَـدَكُمْ إذَا غَضِبَ احْمَرَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ وَانْتَفَخَتْ أَوْدَاجُهُ وَدَخَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ فِيهِ. فَإذَا خَافَ أَحَدُكُمْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ فَلْيَلْزَمِ الأَرْضَ، فَإنَّ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ لَيَذْهَبُ عَنْهُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ.

It is reported from al ‘Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said, “Verily, anger is a spark ignited

by the Devil in the human heart. Indeed, when anyone of you gets angry, his eyes become red, the veins of his neck become swollen and Satan enters them. Therefore, whosoever among you is concerned about himself on account of it, he should lie down for a while so that the filth of Satan may be removed from him at the time."(1)

And:

عَنْ مَيْسِرٍ قَالَ: ذُكِرَ الغَضَبُ عِنْدَ أَبِى جعْفرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فَقَالَ: إنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَغْضَبُ فَمَا يَرْضَى أَبَداً حَتَّى يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ. فَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ غَضِبَ عَلَى قَوْمٍ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ فَلْيَجْلِسْ مِنْ فَوْرِهِ ذَلِكَ، فَإنَّهُ سَيَذْهَبُ عَنْهُ رِجزُ الشَّيْطَانِ. وَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ غَضِبَ عَلَى ذِى رَحِمٍ فَلْيَدْنُ مِنْهُ فَلْيَمِسَّهُ. فَإنَّ الرَّحِمَ إذَا مُسَّتْ سَكَنَتْ.

Maysir reports that once anger was discussed in the presence of Imam al Baqir (A). He said, "Verily, it happens that an angry person would not be satisfied until he enters the Fire (i.e. his anger does not subside unless it drags him into the hellfire). Therefore, whoever is angry with someone let him sit down immediately if he is standing; for, indeed, it would repel from him the uncleanliness of Satan. And whoever gets angry with his kinsman, let him approach him and pat him; for the feeling of consanguinity, when stimulated by touch, induces calmness."(2)

These two traditions suggest two practical remedies of anger in its initial stage. One is general and recommends sitting down and bringing about a change in posture (according to another tradition, if somebody be seated at the time of getting angry, he should

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1- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵.

2- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi, p. ۴۱۵.

stand up). It is reported by Sunni sources that the Apostle of God (S), if he ever got angry while standing, would sit down, and if seated, would recline, and his anger would subside. The other remedy which is particular is concerned with blood relations and suggests that if anybody gets angry with someone related to him by blood, if he touches him with his hand his anger will cool down.

These are the methods of curing oneself of one's anger; but if others want to treat an enraged person, if his anger is in the initial stage, any one of the methods from among the various practical and theoretical ones suggested may be useful. But if he is in extreme anger, advice and counsel give opposite results, and it becomes very difficult to treat him in this stage, except by being put in a state of alarm by someone whom he holds in high esteem; for anger vents itself on those whom one deems weaker and inferior to oneself or at least as equal in power and position. But in front of those persons with whom he is impressed, his anger is never provoked.

Rather his outer excitement and agitation will be transformed into an internal fury confined to his inner self. Not finding any outlet, it will change into a grief within the heart. Hence, it is not at all an easy task to appease a person undergoing outbursts of extreme rage. We seek refuge in God from it.

How To Eradicate The Roots Of Anger

Among the

fundamental remedies of anger, one is to exterminate the factors responsible for its provocation. They are many, and here we can mention only a few of them. One of them is self-love, which in ‘turn begets the love of wealth, glory, and honor and the .desire to impose one’s will and expand one’s domain of power

These factors are inherently responsible for exciting the fire of anger, as the individual infatuated with these things tends to hold them in high regard and they occupy a high place in his heart. He, improperly, gets angry and excited if any one of these aspired goals is not achieved or when his desire faces any obstacle and loses control over himself. Greed, avarice, and such other vices that take root in his heart as a result of self-love and the love of glory, snatch the reins of reason from his hands, .leaving the self to commit deeds that deviate from the path of Divine Law and reason

But if his love and interest in these things is not intense-and he gives lesser importance to these matters, his inner calm and contentment, obtained by giving up the love of wealth, honor and the like, will not allow his self to act against the demands of justice. Then, he will not find it difficult to maintain his patience in hardships, and will not lose grip of self-restraint. He would not get angry unnecessarily and abnormally. If the love of the world is eradicated from his

heart and this vice is completely wiped out, then all other vices also take leave and vanish from it, vacating the realm of the soul to be taken over by moral virtues.

Another factor that arouses anger is that sometimes anger and its evil manifestations, which are in fact great moral defects and indecencies, are imagined to be merits and accomplishments on account of ignorance and lack of understanding. Some fools reckon those vices as marks of bravery and courage and brag about themselves on account of them. They confuse the virtue of valor, which is a superb attribute of the believer's character and a commendable quality, with this pernicious vice.

However, it should be noted that courage or valor is a different thing, and its source, its causes, effects and characteristics differ totally from those of that injurious vice. Courage originates in the strength of one's spirit, serenity of mind, moderateness, faith, and lack of concern for the vanities of life and indifference to its vicissitudes; whereas anger is the product of spiritual weakness and degeneration, insufficiency of faith, immoderation of character and soul, love of the world and concern for mundane things and the fear of losing the pleasures of life.

Hence this vice is found more frequently in women than in men, more in sick individuals than in healthy people, more in children than in grown ups, more in the elderly than in young people. Valor and courage is its opposite. Those suffering from moral infirmities are more

liable to get angry sooner than those who are morally sound. Thus, we often see such people get angry sooner and becoming fiercer if any encroachment is made upon .their property than the others

This was about the origins and motives of anger and courage. However, they are also different as to their effects. The irascible person, when under the spell of anger and its excitement, behaves unreasonably like a lunatic or like an animal which acts without rationally considering the consequences of its actions, and commits ugly and indecent acts. His tongue, limbs, and other parts of the body go out of his control. His eyes, lips and mouth are distorted in such an ugly manner that he will be ashamed of .his ugly features if he is shown a mirror at the time

Some persons who are afflicted with this vice not only do not refrain from venting their anger on innocent animals, but do not spare even inanimate things. They curse air, water, earth, snow, rain and other elements of nature if anything happens against their wish. Sometimes they vent their fury on a book, pen, glass or jug, tearing it up or .breaking it into pieces

But the behavior of a courageous person is different in all these matters. His acts are based on reason and tranquility of soul. He gets angry on the proper occasion and is patient and restrained when required to be so. He is not provoked or incensed by each and every annoyance. He

becomes angry on the proper occasion to the proper extent and takes his vengeance with reason and discretion. He knows well as to against whom to take his revenge, on what occasion, to what degree and in what manner, and as to whom he should .forgive and what to overlook and ignore

In the state of anger, he does not lose control of his reason, and he never makes use of indecent language nor acts indiscreetly. All his acts are based on rational considerations and are in accordance with the norms of justice and Divine Law. He .always acts in such a manner so as not to regret later on

Thus an aware human being should not confuse this quality, which is one of the attributes of prophets, awliya' and true believers and is considered a spiritual accomplishment and achievement, with the vice which is one of the attributes of Satan, a diabolical incitement, a spiritual abomination and a flaw of the heart. Yet, the veils of ignorance and folly and the curtains of self-love and attachment to the world cover man's hearing and blind his vision, rendering him helpless and bringing about .his destruction

Certain other causes of anger have also been pointed out, such as 'ujb, bragging (iftikhar), pride (kibr), disputatiousness (mira'), obstinacy (lajaj), jesting and the like; but to go into their details will prolong this discussion and might be cumbersome. Possibly most or all of them, directly or indirectly, originate in the two sources already discussed. And praise

.be to God

(Eighth Hadith: Prejudice ('Asabiyyah

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلی مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِیِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِیمَ، عَنْ أَبِیهِ، عَنِ النَّوْفَلِیِّ، عَنِ السَّکُونِیِّ، عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ کَانَ فِی قَلْبِهِ حَبَّهٌ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ عَصَبِیَّهٍ بَعَثَهُ اللهُ یَوْمَ القِیَامَهِ مَعَ أَعْرَابِ الجَاهِلِیَّهِ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni), from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from al-Nawfali, from al-Sakuni, who reports on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) that the Prophet (S) said, "Whosoever possesses in his heart 'asabiyyah (prejudice in any of its forms such as tribalism, racism, nationalism) even to the extent of a mustard seed, God will raise him on the Day of Resurrection with the (pagan) (Bedouins of the Jahiliyyah (the pre-Islamic era)."(۱)

Exposition

Although now khardal is current in modern Persian for the mustard seed, the word for it in old Persian was espandan. It is said that the mustard seed has many medicinal uses and is also used for making candles. As to the word 'asabiyyah it is the characteristic of the person who supports his kinsmen and relatives even for a wrong .and unjust cause

Usbah refers to paternal relatives, as they are more likely to be those among whom' one is surrounded ('asaba: to wrap around) and those from whom one derives strength ('asaba means, also, to bind). 'Asabiyyah and ta'assub in general give the .sense of favoring and defending. So much for the lexical meaning

As to its nature, I believe that 'asabiyyah is an inner

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۱ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Intisharat 'Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic .text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), p. ۴۱۹

psychic quality which is manifested in patronizing and defending one's kindred and those with whom one has some kind of affinity or relation, whether it be religious creed or ideology, or whether it be soil or home. The affinity may also be similarity of profession or the relationship of teacher and pupil, or something else. It is a moral vice and an abominable trait which itself begets many more moral and behavioral deviations and vices as well. In itself a condemnable quality, it may take the form of defense of truth or religion, but in reality it is not aimed to defend a just and truthful cause but for extending one's own influence or that of one's co-religionists and allies.

As to the defense of truth, the efforts to disseminate it and to posit something which is true, are either not 'asabiyyah, or, if they are, represent a commendable kind of it. The criterion lies in the distinct aims and purposes, and to the extent to which it involves selfish and diabolical ends or serves just and godly purposes.

In other words, when a man supports his kinsmen and friends, if he does so purely for the sake of upholding justice and defeating injustice, this kind of 'asabiyyah is commendable and praiseworthy; because supporting justice and truth is among the sublimest of human qualities, being one of the attributes of the prophets of God (A) and His awliya'. Its sign is that one should support the party which is on the

.side of truth and justice, even though it may consist of one's enemies

Such a person is a defender and lover of truth; he will be counted among the champions of human sublimity, a rightful citizen of the ideal human society, and a wholesome member of society whose presence exerts a reforming influence on the evils of the public. And if one's selfish and tribal instincts arouse him to defend and patronize the vices and wrongs of his kinsmen and associates, he is inflicted with the vice of 'asabiyyah; he is a corrupt member of society, who corrupts it by confusing vice with virtue, and stands with the Bedouins of the Jahiliyyah, who were a group of nomadic Arabs who inhabited the desert before the advent of Islam, in an era of .prevalence of darkness and ignorance

This vice had taken hold of them to the highest degree, and among Arabs in general, who are guided by the light of guidance (through Islam) this vice is more than in any other nation. According to a tradition reported from Imam 'Ali (A), God Almighty will punish six groups of people for six kinds of sins: He will punish the Arabs for 'asabiyyah, the peasants for pride, the rulers for oppression, the jurisprudents for .jealousy, the merchants for dishonesty, and the villagers for ignorance

The Evils Of 'Asabiyyah

From traditions narrated from the Household of the Prophet (S) it may be inferred that the vice of 'asabiyyah is one of the fatal sins, which results in an

evil life in the Hereafter and drives man out from the precincts of faith, being one of :the abominable traits of the Devil

عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ تَعَصَّبَ أَوْ تُعُصِّبَ لَهُ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَهَ الإيمَانِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ.

In al-Kafi, through a chain of authentic narrators], it is reported from Abu ‘Abd Allah] (Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Prophet (S) said, “The one who exerts ‘asabiyyah or the (one on whose behalf it is exerted, the tie of faith is taken off his neck.”(١)

That is, such a man is deprived of faith and abandoned. As to the person in whose interest ‘asabiyyah is exerted, perhaps he is also included in the hadith due to his compliance to the behavior of the one exerting ‘asabiyyah and hence made to share his lot jointly. And it is stated in hadith that whosoever approves of the action of a certain group is counted amongst it. However, if he does not approve of it and detests .it, this tradition would not apply to him

:And

عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ تَعَصَّبَ عَصَبَهُ اللهُ بِعِصَابَهٍ مِنْ نَارٍ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said, “Whosoever practices ‘asabiyyah (against (someone), God shall wrap around him (‘asabahu) a fold (‘isabah) of Fire.”(٢)

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ قَالَ: لَمْ يَدْخُلِ الجَنَّهَ حَمِيَّهٌ غَيْرَ حَمِيَّهِ حَمْزَهَ بْنِ عَبْدِ المُطَّلِبِ - وَذَلِكَ حِينَ أَسْلَمَ - غَضَباً لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِه.

Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) is reported to have said: No hamiyyah shall ever enter Paradise, except the

١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Intisharat ‘Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic .text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), p. ٤١٩

٢- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Intisharat ‘Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic .text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), p. ٤١٩

hamiyyah of Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, which was (expressed) at the time when he became a Muslim on account of his anger in support of the Prophet (S)."(۱)

The episode of Hamzah's conversion to Islam has been reported variously, and is not relevant to our discussion. In any case, it is obvious that faith-which is the invisible holy gift of God to His special servants, the sincere devotees of His Court, and the champions of His love-is contrary to a quality that disregards truth and reality and tramples truthfulness and uprightness under its feet.

Of course, if the mirror of the heart be covered with the dust of self-love and the love of the kindred and improper and blind 'asabiyyah, the light of faith will not shine in it; it will not be fit to be the hidden abode of the Most High.

The person whose heart has been the mirror for the light of faith and gnosis, the one whose neck has been tied in the firm and unbreakable rope of faith, the one who is the hostage of reality and Divine knowledge, the one who remains wedded to the religious precepts and confined to rational principles and laws, the one who derives all his impulses from reason and Divine Law-no force of customs, ways, or familiar things can cause him to quiver or deviate from the right path.

One can profess Islam and claim iman only when he is submissive to truth and humble in front of it,

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۱ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Intisharat 'Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), p. ۴۱۹.

and when he deems his own aims and purposes, no matter however great they may be, as trivial and transitory, before the aims and purposes of his Lord and Provider; he annihilates his own will in the Will of his real Lord. Of necessity, such a person will be free from all traces of ignorant ‘asabiyyah; his face will be turned towards reality, and .thick curtains of ignorance and ‘asabiyyah would not obstruct his vision

When called to administer justice and utter the word of truth, he puts a firm foot on the head of all associations and ties, sacrificing all ties of kinship and customary affinities at the altar of the aims and objectives of his Lord. If there is a clash between the Islamic ‘asabiyyah and the ‘asabiyyah of the Jahiliyyah, he gives precedence to .his Islamic ‘asabiyyah and his ‘asabiyyah for truth

An enlightened human being knows that all the ‘asabiyyahs and all associations and relationships are merely transitory accidents and are perishable. The only relationship that is permanent and lasting and the only ‘asabiyyah that is true, is the relationship between the Creator and the created being, and is essential and unbreakable; it is .firmer, higher, and prior to all the ties of lineage and alliance

A Prophetic Tradition

:The Prophet of God (S) is reported to have said

كُلُّ حَسَبٍ وَنَسَبٍ مُنْقَطِعٌ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ إلا حَسَبِى وَنَسَبِى.

All the ties of lineage and affinity will be broken on the Day of Resurrection except the .ties of my lineage and affinity

It is

obvious that the ties of lineage and affinity of that holy personage are spiritual and lasting, and free from all pre-Islamic biases and 'asabiyyahs. In fact the spiritual ties of lineage will be more vivid in that world and its merits more conspicuous. On the other hand, the physical and terrestrial relationships that are rooted in human habits .and customs are very weak and fragile and are broken easily

None of them have any worth and value whatsoever in the next world, except those relationships that are established according to the Divine celestial system and under the auspices of the precepts of the Law and dictates of reason: only they are .unbreakable and unseverable

The Otherworldly Form Of 'Asabiyyah

It was mentioned in some of the ahadith discussed previously that the criteria of the otherworldly forms, which human traits will acquire in the Barzakh and on the Day of Resurrection, are the habits and qualities and their strength. That world is the domain of the dominance of the spirit and the subservience of the body. It is possible that .men should be raised in the forms of animals or Satans

The present tradition which we are expounding, and which maintains that 'the person who possesses in his heart 'asabiyyah even to the extent of a mustard seed, God Almighty will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment with the Bedouins of the pre-Islamic era', may also refer to the above-mentioned point. The man possessing this vice, after being transferred to the other world may behold himself

as one of the pre Islamic heathen Bedouins, who neither had faith in God Almighty nor .believed in prophets and prophethood

Whatever the inner and outer form of that tribe had been, he will find himself when resurrected as one of them. Perhaps he will himself not understand as to why such a thing would happen to him, while in the world he professed the true religion of God and claimed to be an adherent of the faith of the Holy Prophet (S). It is mentioned in a tradition that the inhabitants of Hell will not be able to remember the name of the Prophet (S), and, as such, would not be able to introduce themselves as his followers, .unless God Almighty resolves on their deliverance

And since, according to some of the traditions, the trait of ‘asabiyyah is one of the attributes of Satan, may be the heathen Bedouins of the pre-Islamic era, as well as the individuals possessing the primitive habit of ‘asabiyyah would be resurrected in :the form of Satan

وَعَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ المَلائِکَهَ کَانُوا یَحْسَبُونَ أنَّ إبْلِیسَ مِنْهُمْ وَکَانَ فِی عِلْمِ اللهِ أَنَّهُ لَیْسَ مِنْهُمْ، فَاسْتَخْرَجَ مَا فِی نَفْسِهِ بِالحَمِیَّهِ وَالغَضَبِ فَقَالَ: خَلَقْتَنِی مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِینٍ.

According to a reliable hadith of al-Kafi), Abu ‘Abd Allah (Imam al Sadiq) (A) is) reported to have said, “Verily, the angels counted Satan as one of themselves, and it was in the knowledge of God that he was not of them; then he spoke out whatever

was inside him, out of hamiyyah and anger, and said (to God): 'Thou createdst me of fire, and him (Adam) Thou didst create of clay."(1)

Thus my dear, you should know that this vice belongs to Satan and is a fallacy inspired in you by that accursed being based on false analogical inference. He committed the mistake because of the dense veils of 'asabiyyah. This veil conceals all realities from the sight, or rather shows all one's vices as virtues and the virtues of others as vices. And it is obvious as to where the deeds of the person who beholds things in a contrary perspective would lead him. Besides being itself a source of human ruin and doom, it gives rise to a number of moral, spiritual and behavioral villainies, the description of which would be cumbersome.

As such, a wise person, who understands these villainies as the products of this vice and confirms the testimony of the truthful Holy Prophet (S)-whose truthfulness has been confirmed by God-and the Members of his Household (A), who all state that this trait leads man to destruction and makes him an inhabitant of the Fire, should seriously consider about curing himself, and if, God forbid, there is the slightest speck of this vice in his heart, equal to the size of a mustard seed, he should purge it, so that he may be thoroughly purified before leaving this world and being transferred to the next.

He should be free from this vice

1- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Intisharat 'Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi), p. ۴۱۹.

at the hour of his death, so as to put his feet into the other world with a pure soul. He should keep in his mind that he has fiery little time and very limited opportunity; for he .does not know as to when he will have to depart from this world

A Colloquy With The Self

O my vicious self! Perhaps your death may approach while you are still busy in writing these pages, and transfer you with all your moral vices to the next world from where there is no return. And O you dear reader of these pages, draw a lesson from the life of this writer who may be today under the ground and in the other world, a victim of his ugly acts and wicked behavior. As long as he was given opportunity, he spent the precious days of his life in vain pursuit of lusts and desires and squandered that gift of God with vain profligacy. Yet you must be careful as you too shall be in a condition .similar to his, and you don't know when

Perhaps as you are reading these pages, the opportunity may slip if you go on procrastinating. O brother! Do not put off these matters; they are not to be postponed. Remember, how many hail and hearty people have suddenly been snatched away by the claws of death, and we have no knowledge about what awaited .them in the Hereafter

Therefore, do not let the chance slip and consider every second as precious; for the

matter matters a lot and the journey is a perilous one. If you lose the opportunity of doing something in this world, which is the field whose harvest is the Hereafter, you will not be able to do anything any more and you will not be able to straighten your crookedness. There will be nothing left except regret, perplexity, chastisement, and .degradation

The men of God were never at ease even for a little while; they were never oblivious of the perilous and hazardous journey ahead. The condition of the fourth Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) was amazing. The laments of Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Ali (A) are .stunning

What is the matter with us that we are so negligent? Who has given us assurance except the Devil, who makes us put off our actions for tomorrow and wants to bulge the number of his followers and companions by making us share his attributes? Doesn't he, in this way, want to include us in his company so that we may be ?resurrected in his retinue

The accursed creature always diminishes the importance and seriousness of the matters of the Hereafter in our eyes, and makes us oblivious of the remembrance of God and obedience to His commands by means of the promises of His mercy and the intercession of the intercessors. But, alas, such temptations have no truth and belong .to the deceitful paraphernalia of the snares of that accursed creature

Of course, even at present, you are immersed in the

mercy and compassion of God, rejoicing in the gifts of sound health and well-being, life and safety, guidance and reason, opportunity and directions for the reformation of the soul and other such myriad favors. Yet you are not drawing benefit from these favors in this world by complacently following the Devil. Beware if you fail to draw any benefit from God's mercy in this world, in the next world also you will not be able to benefit from the infinite mercy of God and the intercession of the intercessors. The guidance provided by them is this-worldly reflection of the intercession of the intercessors in the next world and the otherworldly reflection of the guidance .provided by them here is intercession

But if you cannot benefit from the guidance, remember that you will not be able to receive the benefit of intercession either; it depends on the guidance you utilize here. The intercession of the Holy Prophet (S) is general and universal; however, like the blessings of God, the receiver must have capacity to receive it. If, God forbid, Satan robs you of the faculty of faith, you will be incapable and unworthy of receiving Divine mercy and the intercession of the intercessors. Yes, God's bounties in the two worlds are plenty and His mercy unlimited; but if you really seek His mercy, then why do you neglect His unceasing bounties in this world that are like seeds of His favors in the ?other

All the prophets of God and the

awliya' have invited you to the Divine feast, yet you turn away and you do not accept it on account of the evil insinuations of the Devil. You sacrificed the muhkamat (the firm verses) of the Book of God, the mutawatirat of the prophets and awliya', the compelling rational arguments of the wise, and the definite proofs of the hukama' for the fiendish fantasies and fancies of your own. Woe to you and me for our state of .neglectfulness, blindness, deafness, and ignorance

On The 'Asabiyyahs Of The Intellectuals

One of the types of 'asabiyyahs is stubbornness in intellectual matters and the habit of supporting the statements and ideas of one's own or that of one's teacher or spiritual master not for the sake of defending truth and refuting falsehood. It is obvious that such a kind of 'asabiyyah is worse and more improper in some ways than other types of 'asabiyyah. This, because a scholar and an intellectual ought to be an instructor of mankind, scholarship being a branch of the tree of prophethood and .wilayah itself

He should be aware of the evil effects and bad consequences of moral vices. If, God forbid, he himself possesses the vice of 'asabiyyah and attaches to himself the mean attributes of Satan, he will have scarcely anything to offer in self-defense and will be .taken to task severely

The person who poses himself as a guiding beacon of light, a source of enlightenment in the assembly of mankind, as a guide to the path of felicity, and as

one who is charged with the duty of guiding men on the path of Hereafter, if, God forbid, he does not remain faithful to his words and his inner being contradicts his outward appearance, he will be grouped with the hypocrites and the pretentious. He will be branded as an evil scholar, a man of knowledge devoid of good deeds, whose retribution is a painful chastisement, as described by God Almighty in the Holy Quran:

(بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِی الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.)

Wretched is the likeness of those who deny the revelations of Allah. And Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. (۶۲:۵)

Hence it is essential for scholars to retain their integrity and to keep themselves free from such vices, so that having corrected themselves they may be able to reform their society through a truly effective preaching and exhortations that can penetrate the hearts and minds. The corruption of a scholar can lead to the corruption of a nation. And it is obvious that the vice which generates multiple vices and the transgression which begets other transgressions is worse and greater than an isolated, non-contagious vice in the eyes of the Almighty.

Another hideous aspect of this vice in intellectuals is the atrocity done to knowledge itself; as this 'asabiyyah on the part of an intellectual amounts to the abuse of knowledge and disrespect to it. The one who is entrusted with this valuable trust and enrobed in its precious robes, it is his duty to preserve its sanctity

and deliver it safely to its owner. And if one is guilty of the ‘asabiyyah of pagan Bedouins with regard to it, he is of course guilty of the sin of breach of trust, an .injustice and a major sin and offense

The other ugly side of this vice is the wrong done to the other side. Because, the other side that participates in intellectual discourses also comprises of scholars. He too enjoys a sanctity which it is obligatory to observe and to safeguard his honor. Insulting him will be synonymous with violating Divine sanctities, and it is a great sin. Sometimes, senseless ‘asabiyyahs make one insult scholars. I seek refuge in God .from this major offense

Yet another aspect of ‘asabiyyah relates to the person in whose favor ‘asabiyyah is exercised, who may be one’s instructor and tutor. He may be forced to disown his pupil, because all the great masters and saints-karram Allah wujuhahum are naturally attracted towards truth and justice and are abhorrent to untruth and injustice. They detest him who violates justice and gives currency to falsehood through his acts of .‘asabiyyah

Of course, the harms of spiritual disownment are greater than the harms of parental disownment, for spiritual fatherhood is above physical parenthood. Thus, it is incumbent upon scholars-may God increase their station and honor-to protect themselves from all moral and behavioral vices, to adorn themselves with the ornaments of good deeds and moral virtues, and not to be unmindful of the duties of the holy

office which the Most High has bestowed on them, the failure to do which may bring .ruin whose extent is not known to any one except God Almighty alone. Wassalam

(Ninth Hadith: Hypocrisy (Nifaq

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى ثِقَهِ الإِسْلامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ، عَنْ عَوْنٍ القَلانِسِىِّ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِى يَعْفُورَ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ لَقِىَ المُسْلِمِينَ بِوَجْهَيْنِ وَلِسَانَيْنِ جَاءَ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ وَلَهُ لِسَانَانِ مِنْ نَارٍ.

Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from 'Awn ibn al-Qalanisi, from Ibn Abi Ya'fur, who reports Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al-Sadiq) (A) to have said, "One who meets Muslims with a double face and a double tongue, on the Day of Judgment (he will come with two tongues of fire."(١

Exposition

Double-facedness is the characteristic of the person who assumes an outward appearance and simulates a behavior which is contrary to his inner state. For instance, one may give an impression of friendship and affection and pretend to be sincere and sympathetic, while in his heart he harbors an opposite feeling. Such a person displays sympathy and friendship in front of people, but is different in their .absence

Double-tonguedness is the quality of the person who praises and flatters people whenever he meets them, appearing to befriend them, but denounces them and speaks slanderously of them in their absence. Therefore, in the light of this description, the first quality may be

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.Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi (Akhundi), vol. ٢, p. ٣٤٣ -١

specified as 'behavioral nifaq' and the second as 'verbal nifaq'. Perhaps the tradition refers to the evil of nifaq, since these two features are among the prominent and .(peculiar characteristics of the munafiqun (hypocrites

Nifaq is one of psychic maladies and a vicious quality with its own specific signs and symptoms. It has also numerous grades and degrees, which, God willing, we shall .discuss, together with their method of treatment, in the following sections

Degrees Of Nifaq

It should be known that, like other vices and virtues, there are different degrees and stages of intensity and weakness of nifaq. In the case of any vice, if one does not take steps to cure it and does not persevere in the course of its treatment, it would lead him towards its extreme degrees, for there is no limit to the degree of intensity of .vices and virtues

If man leaves his carnal self to its wishes, its innate propensity towards corruption, its instinctive appetite for worldly pleasures, the assistance of the Satan and the insinuations of the Khannas, all together incline it towards evil, and its vices, increasing day by day in intensity, reach the stage when they become an intrinsic, essential and ultimate quality of the soul. Then the regions of one's inner being as well as outer self come under its sovereignty and rule. And if the vice is characteristic of the Devil, such as nifaq and double-facedness, which are attributes of that cursed being-whom the Quran quotes as having said to Adam and

:Eve

(وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّی لَکُمَا لَمِنْ النَّاصِحِینَ.)

(And he swore unto them (saying): Lo. I am a sincere adviser unto you. (٧:٢١

Whereas in reality he was the opposite of what he claimed-the realm of your being will be annexed by the Devil's empire. When that happens, the ultimate form the spirit acquires will be satanic, and its inner essence and substance will also be satanic in nature. It is also possible that the external appearance in the next world will be of the .Satan, though here you have a human form and appearance

Thus, if man does not try to guard himself from this vice and allows his carnal self to act according to its wishes, within a short time all the means of control will be so thoroughly gone that all his labors and efforts will be put into the service of this vice. With whomever he will come in contact, he will meet and greet him double-facedly .and with a double tongue

Socially, his intercourse and relations with others will become tainted with the vice of duplicity, dissemblance and hypocrisy. He will have no other objective except his own personal benefit and no goal except self-aggrandizement. Having trampled upon all the values of truthfulness, sincerity, magnanimity and courage, he will employ duplicity in all of his pauses and deeds, not abstaining from any indecency or perversion. Such a person is away from the domain of humanity and humanness, and on the Day of Judgment he will be raised as a member of

.the legions of the Satan

All that was stated above was regarding the degrees of intensity and weakness of nifaq per se, but it also varies according to that to which it is related. Sometimes one practices nifaq in relation to the religion of God, sometimes with respect to virtues, sometimes in regard to righteous deeds and holy rites, and sometimes in ordinary matters of day-to-day life and common civilities. Also, sometimes one may act with nifaq with respect to the Prophet (S) or the Imams (A), and sometimes with regard to the awliya', the scholars and the believers. Sometimes one may behave with nifaq with Muslims and sometimes with God's creatures belonging to other communities .and creeds

Of course, these types of nifaq vary in the degree of their ugliness and indecency, though all of them are similar in that they share the quality of ugliness and indecency .and are the buds and leaves of the same vicious tree

Effects Of Nifaq

Nifaq and double-facedness, besides being an abominable, ignoble and vicious quality itself, which no decent person would like to adopt and whose possessor is not only excluded from the human category, but cannot be likened to any of the beasts as well, it is a cause of humiliation and ignominy in this world in front of one's fellows and .friends, and brings about disgrace and punishment in the Hereafter also

As mentioned in the tradition, in the Hereafter such a person will be resurrected with two tongues of fire in his mouth. This

will be a source of disgrace for him in front of the creatures of God and will bring about his infamy in the presence of His prophets, apostles and archangels. The severity of the punishment is also indicated by this tradition. Because, if the substance of the body becomes that of fire, imagine how severely it will be felt and what a great .pain and suffering it will inflict. I seek refuge in God from its severity

It is reported in another tradition that the Prophet (S) said that the double-faced person will come on the Day of Resurrection in such a condition that one of his two tongues will protrude from the back of his head and the other from the front, and both the tongues will be aflame, making his entire body ablaze with fire.'(١) Thereupon, it .will be announced that he was double-faced and double-tongued in the world

He will be known on that day by this vice of his, the following Quranic verse having :become applicable to him

(وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِی الْأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَهُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ.)

And sever that which Allah hath commanded should be joined, and make mischief in (the earth; theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode. (١٣:٢٥

Nifaq is source of many an evil and destructive trait, each one of which may bring about one's doom and eternal damnation. One of them is causing discord and sedition (fitnah), which, according to an express text of the Quran, is

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.Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Iqab al-'a'mal (Maktabat al-Saduq), p. ٣١٩ -١

worse than homicide. Another is slandering (namimah), which is denounced by Imam :al-Baqir (A) in the following tradition

مُحَرَّمَهٌ الجَنَّهُ عَلَى الفَتَّانِينَ المَشَّائِينَ بِالنَّمِيمَهِ.

Entry to) Paradise is prohibited to slanderers who walk on the path of calumny (i.e.) (are habitual slanderers).(1)

The sins of slandering others and backbiting are worse than the sin of adultery, according to a statement of the Prophet (S), and are equivalent to subjecting a believer to torture, reviling him, and divulging his secrets; each one of which alone is .enough to bring about one's destruction

Let it be known to you that other bad habits which belong to the category of nifaq are: making gestures, allusions, winking, making signals with the eyes and so on-things that some persons do in order to mock some others, whereas they pose to be friendly and sincere in front of them. One should be very cautious of his own state and be careful of his deeds and behavior, because the snares of the self and the designs of the Satan are very subtle, and there are very few people who are able to save .themselves from them

It is possible that on account of an inappropriate act of beckoning or an improper winking one may be branded as double-faced and double-tongued. Perchance one may possess this bad habit as long as he is alive and imagine himself to be morally .healthy, sound and pure

Therefore, it is essential for an individual to take care, like a devoted and sympathetic physician, of his

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1- Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۶۹.

spiritual and moral health and constantly keep an eye on his own deeds and habits, like a careful and vigilant nurse, and never fall short of his duty. He should know that none of the diseases of the heart is more concealed and elusive, and at the same time so fatal, than this disease, and no nurse should be more sympathetic and kind than an .individual to himself

Cure Of The Disease Of Nifaq

:There are two ways of getting rid of this greatly evil vice

The first is to think about the harms that proceed from this vice, in this world as well as in the Hereafter. One should deliberate upon the matter that if he becomes known in this world for having this bad habit, he will be degraded in the eyes of his fellows and become infamous among his fellow human beings. They will avoid his company and he will be deprived of their friendliness. Moreover, he will fail to achieve any merit and to reach his higher goals. Thus it is necessary for a man of honor and dignity endowed with the conscience to purge himself of this ignominy that consumes honor, .and not to allow himself to be entrapped in its disgraces

Besides, in the other world, which is the realm of the unveiling of secrets, where things that remained concealed from the eyes of people shall not be hidden, there, he will be raised a deformed, ugly creature possessing two tongues of fire and punished ,along with the hypocrites and devils. Therefore

it is incumbent upon a man of wisdom, who sees no good in it but harm, ugliness and .abomination, to get rid of this vice

The other treatment, which involves action, is another method of curing the self. It requires the individual to be extremely vigilant regarding his acts and pauses, and that he should act deliberately against his base wishes, wage a war against himself .and try to improve his self inwardly as well as outwardly, in deed as well as in speech

He should abstain from affectation, coquetry and dissemblance in practice, and beseech the Almighty's help and assistance during this period to give him supremacy over his carnal self and its desires and to guide and accompany him in this undertaking. His mercy and grace towards His creatures are boundless, and whosoever advances towards Him wishing to reform himself, He extends His support .and help to him

If one perseveres in this for several days, it is hoped that the soul would become purified and the rust of hypocrisy and double-facedness will be removed from it. The mirror of his heart and his inner being will be cleansed of this vice, and it will be ready .again to receive the favors and blessings of the Bestower

Because it has been established through rational proofs, and also confirmed by experience, that as long as man lives in this world, he is conditioned by the deeds and actions committed by him, and every one of his deeds, the pious as well

as the vicious ones, leave their impressions and effects on the soul. If the deeds are pious and good, they leave a luminous and sublime effect; if not, a dark and negative .impression is left on the soul

Thus, as a result, the heart is either rendered bright and luminous or dark and gloomy, according to the deeds. He is either grouped with the good and virtuous, or with the vicious and corrupt. Therefore, as long as we tarry in this house of action and this place of cultivation, we can freely steer our hearts in the direction of felicity or in the direction of wretchedness. We are hostages of our actions, about which the Quran :says

(فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight (will see it. (۹۹:۷-۸

Some Forms Of Nifaq

Let it be known to you, dear friend, that one of the forms of nifaq, double-facedness and double-tonguedness is nifaq with the Almighty, the King of kings, and the Bestower and the Nourisher, with which we are inflicted in this world but are not aware of it. Thick curtains of ignorance and folly and dark veils of the love of the self and the world have obstructed our vision in such a way that it is not possible for us to know our defects before the time of the divulging of secrets and the raising of these curtains and veils and before departing

from this world of nature and saying farewell to this house of illusion and this zone of .neglect and stupor

Although now we have receded into a state of physical stupor and obliviousness, and are intoxicated by the attractions of physical life and sensual existence, which beautify all moral and behavioral villainies in our eyes, the moment shall come when we shall wake up and come to our senses, and realize that there is nothing left for us to be done, that we have lost the opportunity-and have been branded as munafiqun, double-faced, and double-tongued, and resurrected with two flaring tongues or with .two hideous faces

Then, even if we weep and wail, and yell out, "Lord, send me back into the world," the answer will come, "Never." Such will be the fate of our double-faced ness; while, in this life, you and I have been claiming faith in the Unity of God throughout, and professing to be Muslims and true believers untiringly, and even making ardent claims .of His love

If we are laymen, we boast of our faith in Islam, our sincerity of faith and our piety. If we belong to the class of ulama and jurisprudents, we pretend the highest degree of sincerity (ikhlas) and put forth claims to the wilayah and the khilafah of the Prophet :((S). We imagine that the words uttered by the Prophet (S

اللّٰهُمَّ ارْحَمْ خُلَفائِی.

.O God! Have mercy upon my successors

And by the present Imam (A) -may my soul be sacrificed for

:him

إِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِی.

.Verily they are my proofs

And all other statements of the Imams (A) about ulama and fuqaha', to have been .spoken about ourselves

And if we belong to the class of scholars of philosophy and the rational sciences, claiming to possess true faith based on deductive proofs, we deem ourselves to be men of certain knowledge ('ilm al-yaqin), and those who possess 'ayn al-yaqin and haqq al-yaqin, considering all others as possessing imperfect knowledge and infirm .faith, and applying all the pertinent Quranic verses and traditions to ourselves

And if we count ourselves among the mystics and men of 'irfan, claiming mystic knowledge, ecstasies of love, states of annihilation in God and subsistence through Him (fana' fi Allah, baqa' bi Allah) and His vicegerency (wilayat al- amr), we apply such .appellations, and whatsoever that appears to be attractive, to ourselves

Thus, each one of our various groups claims some kind of high station by employing a vocabulary that it considers suitable for itself and for the display of its particular relation to the Truth. If this outward display complies with his inner reality and this appearance corresponds to his secret inward, he is of course truthful in claims and his :blessed condition indeed deserves congratulations

هَنِیئاً لَهُ وَلأَرْبَابِ النَّعِیمِ.

.May the blessing do much good to him and to its other possessors

But if he is, like this writer, a deformed wretch, he should know that he belongs to the class of munafiqun and the double tongued. He should set out to treat himself and

make use of the opportunity before it slips away, and do something about his unfortunate condition and the day of darkness and humiliation that awaits him.

My dear, you who claim adherence to Islam, there is a tradition in al-Kafi reported from the Apostle of God (S):

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ يَدِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ.

A Muslim is one whose hand and tongue spare all Muslims.(١)

What is the matter with us that we give ourselves the right to harass and hurt, by all possible means, our subordinates, and never hesitate to cause them inconvenience or to create problems for them? Or, if we cannot do any harm by our hands, why do we hurt them with the dagger of our tongue, by using derogatory language in their presence, or, in their absence, by opening their secrets, by slandering them and making false accusations against them?

Therefore, we, whose hands and tongues do not spare Muslims, our claim of adherence to Islam contradicts our reality, and the state of our hearts is opposite to what our knowledge of Islam tells us. Hence we belong to the category of munafiqun and the double-faced.

O you who profess to adhere to the true faith and to submit your heart to the sovereignty of the Almighty! If you have full faith in the Oneness of God, and your heart is devoted to the worship of the One and yearns for the One, and that if you do not believe in the existence of any deity except God, if

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١- Al-Kafi, vol. ٢; Fayd al-Kashani, al-Mahajjat al-bayda', vol. ٣, p. ٣٥٨.

your heart mirrors your outward and your inner is true to your claims, what is wrong with you that you are so subdued and humble in front of the people? Why do you worship and idolize them? Is it for some other reason than this that you believe them to be powerful and influential, and you imagine their power and wealth to be of some ?consequence

Perhaps the only thing that you do not believe to be effective and active in this world is the Will and Determination of God Almighty. Aren't you humble and subdued in front of all the external phenomena, yet neglectful towards the really Powerful, the First Cause? Yet in spite of this state of mind, you assert your faith in the Unity of God! You should know that you are a foreigner to the community of believers, and belong to the .group of munafiqun and the double-tongued and will be resurrected with them

You who profess to be a genuine monotheist and of sincere piety, if you are really sincere and abstain from worldly pleasures only for the sake of God and His abode of bliss, what is wrong with you that you are so eager to hear people say in your praise that so and so is such a pious man, and are jubilant when someone says such a thing? Why are you willing to die for the company of the rich and affluent and flee from that ?of the poor and needy

You must know

that neither your monotheism nor your piety are genuine. Your piety and abstinence are for the sake of the world, and your heart is not sincerely devoted to God. Your .claims are false and you belong to the category of the double-faced and munafiqun

And you who claim to be an appointee to the office of wilayah (leadership) by the Wali Allah (i.e. the Twelfth Imam) and to that of khilafah by the Apostle (S) of God, if your condition is in accordance with the specifications mentioned in the tradition of :al-'Ihtijaj

صَائِناً لِنَفْسِهِ حَافِظاً لِدِينِهِ مُخَالِفاً لِهَوَاهُ مُطِيعاً لأمْرِ مَوْلاهُ.

He who keeps his soul chaste, safeguards his faith, opposes his desires, and obeys (the commands of his Master.(١

If you are yourself a branch of the tree of wilayah and risalah (prophethood), and if you are neither inclined towards the world, nor yearn for the nearness of kings, rulers and nobles, nor you are averse to the company of the poor, then indeed you deserve your name and title and you are certainly one of the proofs (hujjah) of God among the humankind; otherwise you are one of the wicked ulama and the munafiqun, and your plight is worse than that of the aforementioned group of people, and your deeds more abominable and your life far more wretched and miserable; since there is no ground .for any plea or pretext for the ulama

And you who claim to possess the Divine hikmah and the knowledge of the realities of the origin and the

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Al-Tabarsi, al-'Ihtijaj, vol. ٢, p. ١٠٦; al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. ١٨, p. ٩٩; -١ al-Kulayni, op. cit., vol. ١, p.۴١٢; al-Shaykh al-Tusi, al-Tahdhib, vol. ۶, p. ٣٠١; al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Man la yahduruhu al-faqih, vol. ٣; al-Nuri, Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ٣, p. ١٨٧ .; Shaykh Muhammad Hasan, al-Jawahir, vol. ۴٠, p. ٣٢

end (al-mabda' wa al-ma'ad), if you do possess the knowledge of the realities of causes and effects, and if in reality you know the forms assigned to men in Barzakh and the matters of heaven and hell, you should not have found peace for a while and should have spent each and every moment of your life in the construction of the life in .eternity

You should have sought refuge from this world and its temptations. You know as to what sort of torments lie ahead and what darkness and severities await you. Yet why didn't you step out from behind the curtain of terms and concepts? Why haven't the rational demonstrations and proofs exerted any influence on your heart, even to the ?extent of the wing of a fly

Hence, in such a state, know that you stand outside the class of true believers and hukama', and on the Day of Judgment you will be resurrected in the ranks of munafiqun. Woe unto the man who spent his whole life arid energies in acquiring the knowledge of the metaphysical, yet could not overcome his intoxication and !infatuation with the physical, so that not even one of the truths ever entered his heart

And you who claim the gnosis of God, and speak of spiritual fervor, of wayfaring, of His love and your wish to annihilate yourself in the Divine Essence, if you are sincere in your devotion to God and belong to the category of ashab al-qulub, men of enlightenment

with a record of virtuous past, then may it do you much good. Otherwise, inflated, theopathetic utterances (shathiyyat), pretentious ecstasies, and extravagant claims reveal only your self love and your -satanic tendencies, which are opposed to the love :of God and godly fervor, for God says

إنَّ أَوْلِيائِی تَحْتَ قِبابِی لا یَعْرِفُهُمْ غَیْرِی.

(Verily, My awliya', under My vault (i.e. the sky), are known to none except Me.(١)

If you do belong to the category of the awliya' of God, His lovers and those absorbed totally in His love, it is indeed known to God. There is no need for you to boast about your high station in front of people. Do not distract the unsteady hearts of the creatures of God from their Creator, by inclining them towards a creature of His. Do not trespass upon the house that belongs to God. Know that those creatures are dear to God, and their hearts are valuable and precious they are to be employed in the service of God. Do not make a sport of the house of the Lord, and do not put your ,hands on His sanctities, for it has been said

فَإنَّ لِلْبَیْتِ رَبّاً.

.Indeed the house has a Master

Hence, if you are not true in your claims, you will be grouped with the double-faced and the men of nifaq. But let me stop here, since it isn't proper for a wretch like me to .speak any further

O you vile self of the writer, who make much pretence: do something about the dark

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.Ahadith qudsi. Source untraced -١

days of your life and find a way out of your wretchedness. If you are really sincere and your heart agrees with your tongue and your inner intention is compatible with your outward appearance, why are you so heedless, your heart so blackened, and your lusts so indomitable? Why don't you think about the journey of death, which is so full of perils? Your days are past, yet you have not given up your lusts and desires. You .have spent your days in satisfying lusts and in neglect and mischief

The time of your death draws near, yet you are enmeshed in your vicious deeds and entrapped in your indecent conduct. O preacher, who would not learn any lesson, you stand in the midst of munafiqun and the double-faced. Being one of them, it is feared that you will be resurrected with two tongues of fire and two faces of fire, if you .continue in your present state

O God, awaken us from this protracted spell of deep slumber, and bring us back to our senses from this state of intoxication and unconsciousness. Illumine our hearts with the light of faith and have mercy on us. We are not champions of this field. You Yourself succor us and deliver us from the talons of the Devil, for the sake of Your chosen servants, Muhammad and his undefiled progeny, upon all of whom be God's .benedictions

Tenth Hadith: Desire And Hope

point

بِالأَسْنَادِ المُتَّصِلَهِ إِلَی رَئِیسِ المُحَدِّثِینَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَیْهِ، عَنِ الحُسَیْنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ،

عَنْ مُعَلَّى بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنِ الوَشَّاءِ، عَنْ عَاصِمِ بْنِ حَمِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِی حَمْزَهَ، عَنْ یَحْیَى بْنِ عَقِیلٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِیرُ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: إِنَّمَا أَخَافُ عَلَیْکُمُ اثْنَتَیْنِ: إِتِّبَاعَ الهَوَى وَطُولَ الأَمَلِ. أَمَّا اتِّبَاعُ الهَوَى فَإِنَّهُ یَصُدُّ عَنِ الحَقِّ وَأَمّا طُولُ الأَمَلِ فَیُنْسِی الآخِرَهَ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) (R) reports from al-Husayn ibn Muhammad, he from Mu'alla ibn Muhammad, from al-Washsha', from 'Asim ibn Humayd, he from Abu Hamzah, who narrates on the authority of Yahya ibn 'Aqil that the latter reported that Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (A) said, "I am apprehensive for you on account of two things: submission to desire and cherishing of inordinate hope. As to desire, it prevents one from haqq (Truth, righteousness, God); and as to inordinate hope, it makes man (oblivious of the Hereafter."(١

Exposition

Literally hawiya means 'to love', 'to desire' and 'to become fond of something'. It may either be something commendable or abominable, or it may be something towards which one is inclined as a result of natural urge. The carnal self is inclined towards lust and desire, if it is not bridled by reason and the Shari'ah. But the possibility of hawd being used here as a legal term (haqiqah Shar'iyyah) with a special meaning, as .maintained by some scholars, seems remote

The phrase (صَدَّ عَنْ) gives the sense of repelling something, turning away, preventing or dissuading from something. But here the verb sadda is used in the transitive sense of stopping and preventing. God willing, we shall discuss the two evils and their :consequent conditions

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١- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. ٢, p. ٣٣۶.

first, that of being prevented from the truth and from God; and, secondly, that of .obliviousness of the Hereafter. We implore God's assistance in this regard

On The Evil Of Following One's Desires .۱

:(A)

Though it is not directly relevant to our topic, it is essential to know that the human soul is by nature and instinct inclined to believe not only in the principle of tawhid (monotheism), but to follow all truthful doctrines also. Yet, since the moment of birth and stepping into this universe, man starts growing and developing along with his natural urges and animal desires, except for those who are protected and assisted by God, the Holy Preserver. The latter being exceptions and among the marvels of .existence, are not our concern here

We are here concerned with the condition of the species in general. It is evident that at the time of his birth, after passing through certain stages, man is no better than a weak animal and has no distinction over other animals, except for his potentiality of .becoming a human being. That is, his humanness is potential, not present

Therefore, man is an animal in actuality in the initial stages of his life in this world. No power but the law of animal nature, which governs through the faculties of Desire (shahwah) and Anger (ghadhab), rules over him. And since this marvel of nature is capable of acquiring all kinds of attributes, in order to cater to the needs of these two faculties he employs another fiendish power, the faculty of imagination

quwwah wahmiyyah) also in this direction through such means as: lying, deceit,) hypocrisy, slander and all the other kind of tools. He grows and develops with these three powers, which are the roots of all other vices and fatal sins, and they too .develop and flourish within him with age

If he is not influenced by an instructor or guide, after having grown and reached the age of maturity he becomes a beast of uncommon rarity which surpasses all other beasts and devils in the above-mentioned qualities, becoming only stronger and more completely devilish and bestial. If he retains the same pattern of growth, he will not do anything except follow the desires of the carnal self and servilely obey these three powers. No sign of Divine knowledge or awareness, moral excellence or righteous deed can be found in him, and the innate light of nature gets stifled within his .personality

Thus all the dimensions of spiritual health-which do not go beyond the three above-mentioned things, i.e., Divine knowledge, moral virtues and righteous deeds-are suppressed by the desires of the carnal self. His servility to sensual inclinations and bestial comforts does not allow any of the manifestations of righteousness to appear in his being. The darkness of sensual desire extinguishes the light of reason and faith. He does not experience the second birth which in reality is the birth of the human being. He continues to exist in the same state and is cut off and removed from God .and truth

When he departs from this world in this state and enters the next world, which is the realm of unveiling of reality, he does not find himself in any other form except that of a beast or a devil. With no reminiscence and memory whatsoever of a human existence, he dwells in this state in the abode of eternal darkness, torment and dread, until God Almighty wills what He may. Such is the fate of total servility to sensual .desires which causes one to be cut off absolutely from God and righteousness

It can be concluded from this that the amount of alienation from God is the measure and criterion of the extent of servility to the desires of the self. Conversely, the extent .of such alienation can be gauged by means of the extent of such servility

For instance, a person who had espoused these three faculties since the initial stages of his life, having developed and grown with them, if he is influenced and trained by means of the teachings of the prophets and instructions of scholars and sages, gradually submitting himself to the educative influence of the prophets and the awliya' of God (A) it is possible that the innate potentiality for perfect humanness, which is inherent in his nature, may soon become an actuality. When that happens, all the modes of his inner being acquire a human dimension and the inner devil of the carnal self is converted to faith, as the Prophet of God remarked about

:himself

إنَّ شَيْطَانِی آمِنٌ بِيَدِی.

.The devil inside me has been converted to faith at my hand

The bestial self then surrenders itself to the human self in such a way that it carries its rider like a docile and subdued celestial mount on the journey towards the skies of perfection, becoming a buraq carrying its rider swiftly towards the horizons of the Hereafter, never turning wild again. The powers of Desire and Anger having been subdued by the forces of justice and law (shar'), spiritual peace, balance and justice rule over the domain of man's being, establishing there the Kingdom of God and the rule of righteousness and Divine Law. Nothing that is opposed to justice and truth can occur in it, and the whole kingdom is absolutely freed from all sorts of untruth and .injustice

Therefore, in the same way as the criterion of deprival from truth and righteousness is the pursuit of desire, the criterion of attainment of truth and achievement of righteousness is submission to reason and Divine Law. In between these two extremities, that is, total servility to desire and total subservience to reason, are an infinite number of stages so that every step towards desire is a step away from .righteousness

With every such step the reality is further hidden behind misty veils and the lights of human excellence and the secrets of human existence grow dimmer. And, contrarily, every step that is taken away from desire is instrumental to the same extent in removing the veils and

.in brightening the gleams of Divine light in the domain of the inner being

B) The Qur'an And Hadith On The Evil Of Submission To Desire)

:Denouncing submission to desires, God Almighty says in the Quran

(وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.)

(And follow not desire lest it lead thee astray from the way of God. (۳۸:۲۶

(وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنْ اللَّهِ.)

And who is further astray than he who follows his desire without guidance from God? ((۲۸:۵۰

:And in a tradition of al-Kafi from Imam al-Baqir (A), the Imam is reported to have said

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَقُولُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلالِي وَعَظَمَتِي وَكِبْرِيَائِي وَنُورِي وَعُلُوِّي وَارْتِفَاعِ مَكَانِي، لا يُؤْثِرُ عَبْدٌ هَوَاهُ عَلَى هَوَايَ إلا شَتَّتُّ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرَهُ وَلَبَسْتُ عَلَيْهِ دُنْيَاهُ وَشَغَلْتُ قَلْبَهُ بِهَا وَلَمْ أُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا إلا مَا قَدَّرْتُ لَهُ. وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلالِي وَعَظَمَتِي وَكِبْرِيَائِي وَنُورِي وَعُلُوِّي وَارْتِفَاعِ مَكَانِي، لا يُؤْثِرُ عَبْدٌ هَوَايَ عَلَى هَوَاهُ إلا اسْتَحْفَظْتُهُ مَلائِكَتِي وَكَفَّلْتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ والأَرَضِينَ رِزْقَهُ وَكُنْتُ لَهُ مِنْ وَرَاءِ تِجَارَهِ كُلِّ تَاجِرٍ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ.

The Prophet (S) said: God Almighty said: "By My honor, My Glory, My Greatness, My Light, My Loftiness, and by the Highness of My Station! When My slave gives preference to his desire over My wish, I put his affairs into confusion, make his life baffling in this world and his heart preoccupied with the world, although I do not give him anything of it except what I have preordained for him. And by My honor, My Glory, My Greatness, My Light, My Loftiness and by the Highness of My Station! If My slave prefers

My wish to his desire, My angels protect him, the heavens and the earth guarantee his sustenance, and I look after his trade and bring the world to him though it should be reluctant and recalcitrant."(1)

This tradition is a very authentic one, whose text and wording bear testimony to its pure origin, that its source is no other than God Almighty, the Fountainhead of all knowledge, though its chain of transmission may be a weak one, and to discuss this matter further is not possible here. There is another tradition reported from Amir al Mu'minin (A), which is different from the one we have expounded:

إنِّی أَخْوَفُ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَیْکُمُ اثْنَتَیْنِ: إتِّبَاعُ الهَوَی وَطُولُ الأَمَلِ.

I am apprehensive for you concerning two things: Submission to desire and entertaining of endless hope.(2)

In al-Kafi Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said:

إحْذَرُوا أَهْوَاءَکُمْ کَمَا تَحْذَرُونَ أَعْدَاءَکُمْ، فَلَیْسَ شَیْءٌ أَعْدَی لِلرِّجَالِ مِن اتِّبَاعِ أَهْوَائِهِمْ وَحَصَائِدِ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ.

Be apprehensive of your desires in the same way as you are apprehensive of your enemies. For there is no greater enemy for human beings than their own desires and what their tongues reap.(3)

My dear, remember that desires are endless and ever insatiable. If man takes one step in following them, he will be bound to take a few more. If he submits to one of the desires, he will soon be forced to yield to a number of them. If you open one door to the desires of the self, you will soon be forced to open

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۱- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۳۶.

۲- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۳۶.

۳- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۳۶.

.several other doors to them

Thus a single act of submission will expose you to a number of vices following it and through them you will fall victim to a thousand abominations, until, God forbid, all the roads to God are closed to you, as stated by God Almighty in the Holy Book.

That is why the Commander of the Believers (A), the Wali al-'Amr and the spiritual master and instructor of mankind, who was assigned the task of guiding the human family, has expressed so much concern and apprehension on account of it. Rather, the Holy Prophet (S) and all the Imams (A) are anxious lest the tree of nubuwwah (prophethood) and wilayah - of which the believers are the leaves- should shed its foliage and become as if autumn stricken. Look what the Prophet (S) has said:

تَنَاكَحُوا وَتَنَاسَلُوا، فَإِنِّى أُبَاهِى بِكُمُ الأُمَمَ، وَلَوْ بَالسَّقْطِ.

Marry and procreate, for indeed I shall be proud of you over other nations, even though it should be on account of an aborted fetus.(١)

Obviously, if man happens to stand on such a dangerous path as this, where it is feared that he may fall over the precipice of annihilation, being disowned by his real father-the Holy Prophet (S), who is a mercy for all the worlds-having caused his indignance, what a great misfortune it would be and what disasters and woes it would involve? Thus if you know the Holy Prophet (S) and love the Master of the Faithful (A) and befriend their pure

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١- Al-Hurr al-Amili, Wasai'il al-Shi'ah, Bab ١, hadith ٢.

progeny, relieve their blessed hearts from their fear, anguish and uncertainty on your account. In a verse of the Surat Hud of the Quran the Prophet (S) is addressed thus

(فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ.)

So be steady as thou hast been commanded, thou and those who have turned (unto (Allah) with thee. (11:112

:And the Prophet (S) is reported to have said

شَيَّبَتْنِی سُورَهُ هُودٍ لِمَكَانِ هَذِهِ الآیَهِ.

(The Surat Hud caused my hair to turn grey on account of this verse of it.(1)

Shaykh Shahabadi, the accomplished 'Arif -may my soul be ransomed for him- has :said

(وَمَنْ Although the same verse occurs in the Surat al-Shura- though without the phrase and those who have turned with thee— the reason that the Prophet (S) has—(تَابَ مَعَكَ made special mention of the Surat Hud is that in it God Almighty has demanded from the Prophet (S) the steadiness of his ummah also. The Prophet (S) feared that this task might not be carried out, otherwise he himself had the steadiness, or, rather, he was .in fact the very incarnation of justice and righteousness

So, my brother, if you consider yourself one of the followers of that holy personage and a participant of his mission, come and don't be an embarrassment to him in its fulfillment on account of your ugly, vicious deeds. Think yourself that if one of your children or your kinsmen does something odious or improper by your norms, how ashamed you feel in front of others on their account! And you know that

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1- Al-Tabarsi, Majma' al-bayan, vol. 3.

the Prophet of God (S) and Amir al-Mu'minin (A) are the true fathers of the ummah, for :in the Prophet's own words

أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ أَبَوَا هَذِهِ الأُمَّهِ.

(I and 'Ali are the two fathers of this ummah.(١)

If we are taken into the presence of the Almighty and are called to account in front of them, and should the record of our deeds reflect nothing except evil and odiousness, it would be very hard upon them, for they would feel ashamed in front of the angels and prophets of God. What a great injustice it would be! What a catastrophe we shall have invited for ourselves and what treatment will be meted out to us by God ?Almighty

So, O unjust and ignorant man who have not only done injustice to yourself but are guilty of injustice to your benefactors, who laid down their lives and sacrificed their worldly possessions and comforts of life for the sake of your guidance, who were assassinated after undergoing the hardest sufferings and the harshest tortures and whose women and children were taken captive for the sake of your guidance and your deliverance, should you, instead of being grateful to them for their merciful efforts, be guilty of such a flagrant injustice and imagine that you have been unjust to ?yourself alone

Wake up for a while from this deep slumber and be a little ashamed of yourself. Don't allow yourself to commit the same inequities that were committed by the enemies of the Din. You, who claim

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.Al-Amini, al-Ghadir, vol. ٣, p. ١٠٠ -١

to be a friend, do not be unjust, for the acts of injustice committed by a friend and the .one who claims to be a friend are more grievous and odious

C) On Numerousness Of Desires)

It should be remembered that the desires of the carnal self are numerous and of diverse kinds, varying according to their intensity as well as the desired object. Sometimes they are so subtle that one is not aware of them as suspect wiles of Satan and of the self, unless he is made conscious and waken up. With all their variety, all of them work together in obstructing people from the Divine path and deviating them from it. Their grades are various. There are the victims of desire who take gold and wealth and the like to be their god; there are others about whom Almighty God :informs us in these words

(أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ؟)

(Hast thou seen him who has taken his desire (hawa) to be his god? (۲۵:۴۳

Again, there are those who, according to the holy tradition under discussion, are alienated from God by following the desires of the self and the fabrications of the Devil, in the form of false creeds, corrupt norms or something else. There are the perpetrators of mortal and major or minor and venial sins who are kept from the path .of God in a measure proportional to the degree of their transgressions

Then there are the followers of legitimate pleasures and desires who, on account of their overindulgence in them, are kept

back from treading the Divine path in a different way. There are the devout given to prayers and formal rites, which are aimed to secure a good life in the Hereafter or to satisfy some worldly purpose or are meant to secure higher spiritual stations or to avoid spiritual decline, who are prevented from the path of God in a different way.

There are the practitioners of ethics devoted to purification of the soul and spiritual disciplining for the sake of attaining self control or reaching the paradise of moral excellence, who are kept from God and righteousness in their own manner. There are the practitioners of ‘irfan, the wayfarers of the Path, the seekers of ecstasies and of mystic stations and states, who have no other purpose except His vision and His vicinity, yet whose vision is obstructed in a different way and are kept from receiving the special illuminations.

Besides, there are other stages whose description is not possible here. Thus it is necessary for every individual, in accordance with the category to which he belongs, to examine his own condition and purge himself of the desires of the self in order not to be kept from the path of righteousness and of truth, so that the doors of compassion and benevolence are opened to him, whatever his station and stage:

وَاللهُ وَلِیُّ الِهدَایَهِ.

Indeed God is the Lord of guidance.

۲. On The Evil Of Endless Hopes

point

This discussion also consists of two sections:

A) On The Endlessness Of Hopes)

Remember that the first and foremost step towards authentic humanness is that of awareness

and awakening (yaqzah), as mentioned by the leading mystics (mashayiq) concerning the stages of wayfaring. There are ten stages in this step, as enumerated by the .great Shaykh Shahabadi, which we are not in a position to elaborate here

However, it is essential to mention here that unless man does not wake up to the fact that he is a traveler with an inescapable journey lying ahead and a destination towards which he must move, he will not muster the resolution necessary to reach his goal. Each of these matters needs an elaboration from which we must abstain for .brevity's sake

However, it is enough to say that one of the biggest obstacles in the way of the awakening that leads one to forget his destination and neglect his journey and deadens his will and resolution is the feeling that there is plenty of time for the journey, that if one does not set out today he may do it tomorrow, if not this month .then the next and so on

Such a state of extended and outstretched hope, together with a false assurance of unlimited life and unbounded availability of time, make man oblivious of his ultimate goal, the Hereafter, and prevent him from preparing for the unavoidable journey and securing provisions for it, ultimately leading him to completely forget the Hereafter .and his goal

May God save us from the state in which one who has a long and perilous journey before him and is given a limited time

in which to procure the provisions and dire necessities of the way, does not possess anything having forgotten both about the journey and his destination. It is obvious that if such a state of neglect befalls one, he will fail to procure the necessary provisions for his way, being helpless and at a loss at the time of departure. Such a .man will perish on his way and his journey will not take him to his desired destination

B) Provisions For The Long Journey Ahead)

And so, my dear, remember that you have a perilous journey ahead, for which the provisions of sound knowledge and fruitful action are needed. The time of departure is unknown. Possibly, there is little time and opportunity left. No one knows when the call for departure will come and one would be forced to depart. This prolonging of hope by you and me arises from self love and is the most masterly of the guiles of the .accursed Satan

Through it he distracts our attention from the Hereafter and keeps us from attending to its affairs. And with the perils of the journey and the obstacles in the way of preparing for it, if we fail to repent or to return to God and if we fail to procure provisions for the journey, the appointed call shall come unexpectedly and send us unprepared and unprovided on the way, without any store of righteous deeds and .useful knowledge which together make up the provisions of the Hereafterly journey

For even if we have performed good

deeds, they are not pure and untainted. A thousand contaminations, each of which is enough to make them unacceptable to God, afflict them. If we acquired any knowledge, it was futile and fruitless for us, our learning being either nonsensical and absurd or itself a big impediment in the path of the Hereafter. Had the deeds that we have done and the knowledge that we have learnt been beneficial, they should have left some mark on us who have been in their pursuit for years and should have .transformed our habits and morals

What went wrong that our forty or fifty years' labor has produced an opposite result and has hardened our hearts, harder even than flint? What did we achieve from salat, which is the mi'raj of a mu'min? Where is that fear of God which is the outcome of true knowledge? God forbid, if we are called to depart from this world in this present !state of ours, there are many a lasting disappointment and remorse in store for us

Therefore, if obliviousness of the Hereafter caused by endless hope is something on account of which the greatest Wali of God, Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (A) is concerned for us, he is justified; for he knows as to how perilous a journey awaits us and that with such a journey in view no one should ever be complacent even for a while. At all times, one should be busy, without a moment of rest, in gathering the provisions for the

Hereafterly journey. If one becomes oblivious of that world or considers it a mere dream, as if that world did not exist and there was no journey to be undertaken, one cannot imagine the calamities that one will have to face and the misfortunes that are .in store for him

It would do us much good if we think for a while about the general state of mind of the Prophet (S) and of Amir al-Mu'minin (A) who were the best of God's creatures and free from error, lapse or forgetfulness-in order to understand our own state in relation to theirs. Their cognition of the hardships and perils of the journey had made them renounce ease and rest, while our ignorance has bred forgetfulness in us. The Seal of the Prophets (S) subjected himself to such austerities and strenuously stood in prayer before his Lord for such lengthy hours that his blessed feet became swollen and the :following verse was sent down to him by the Most Exalted

(طه. مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْکَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى.)

(Ta Ha. We have not sent down the Quran upon thee to cause thee distress. (۲۰:۱, ۲

The state of Amir al-Mu'minin during prayers and his fear of God Almighty are also .well known

Hence, we should know that the journey is full of perils and this spell of obliviousness and forgetfulness of ours is nothing except a ruse of the Devil and a guile of our own self. These endless hopes and unlimited expectations are the biggest snares of Iblis

and the most artful of his ruses. So wake up from this sleep and remember that you are a traveler with goal and purpose. Your destination is the next world and you will .be forced to leave this world ultimately

If you are prepared to set out on this journey and have procured the provisions needed, you will not be rendered helpless or stranded on this journey. Otherwise you will find yourself in a distress which knows no relief, a wretchedness that is not followed by felicity, a humiliation that will last and never be followed by honor, a poverty that does not terminate in abundance, a torment that is not followed by .comfort, a fire that never cools down, and a regret and shame which knows no end

My dear, look what the Commander of the Faithful (A) says, in Du'a Kumayl, in his :supplications to the Almighty

وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ ضَعْفِى عَنْ قَلِيلٍ مِنْ بَلاءِ الدُّنْيَا وَعُقُوبَاتِهَا وَمَا يَجْرِى فِيهَا مِنَ المَكَارِهِ عَلَى أَهْلِهَا، عَلَى أَنَّ ذَلِكَ بَلاءٌ وَمَكْرُوهٌ قَلِيلٌ مَكْثُهُ يَسِيرٌ بَقَاؤُهُ قَصِيرٌ مُدَّتُهُ، فَكَيْفَ احْتِمَالِى لِبَلاءِ الآخِرَهِ وَجَلِيلِ وُقُوعِ المَكَارِهِ فِيهَا وَهُوَ بَلاءٌ تَطُولُ مُدَّتُهُ وَيَدُومُ مَقَامُهُ وَلا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ لأَنَّهُ لا يَكُونُ إلا عَنْ غَضَبِكَ وَانْتِقَامِكَ وَسَخَطِكَ وَهَذَا مَا لا تَقُومُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ.

My Lord) You know my frailness before a little of the afflictions and torments of this) world and before the kind of calamities that affect its inhabitants, though such afflictions and adversities are transitory and short-lived. And how shall I endure the afflictions

of the Hereafter and the severity of its calamities, which are enduring, perpetual and unabating on its inhabitants, since they are nothing other than Your wrath, Your retribution and Your displeasure, which neither the heavens nor the earth can bear.

A torment which the heavens and earth cannot stand has been reserved for you, and it is not enough to awaken you from your deepening slumber and your obliviousness increases day by day!

O slumberous heart! Awake and arise! Get ready for the journey to the Hereafter!

فَقَدْ نُودِیَ فِیکُمْ بِالرَّحِیلِ.

The call of the caravan's departure has been sounded and all around there is the clamor of those who depart and take leave. The agents of 'Izra'il (the angel of death) are at work and they are driving you every moment nearer and nearer to the gates of the Hereafter and yet you are neglectful, unmindful and ignorant!

اللَّهُمَّ إنِّی أَسْأَلُکَ التَّجافِی عَنْ دَارِ الغُرُورِ والإنَابَهَ إلَی دَارِ السُّرُورِ والإسْتِعْدَادِ لِلْمَوْتِ قَبْلَ حُلُولِ الفَوْتِ.

O God, I implore Thee to save me from the house of illusion and the abode of delirium and help me return to the abode of joy. Grant me the ability and preparedness to die before such an opportunity is lost.

Eleventh Hadith: Man's God-Seeking Nature

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلی مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَحْیَی، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ، عَنْ عَلِیِّ بْنِ رِئَابٍ، عَنْ زُرَارَه قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (فِطْرَهَ اللهِ الَّتِی فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَیْهَا.) قَالَ: فَطَرَهُمْ جَمِیعاً عَلَی التَّوْحِیدِ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni),

from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ibn Mahbub, from' Ali ibn Ri'ab, from Zurarah, who said, I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al Sadiq) (A) regarding the words of God: God's creation (fitrah) upon which He originated (mankind. (۳۰:۳۰). The Imam (A) answered: "He originated mankind upon tawhid."(۱)

Exposition

According to lexicographers and exegetes, fatr means creation. According to al-Sihah (Arabic dictionary compiled by al-Jawhari), the word al-fitrah means al-khilqah, i.e. creation. Also, possibly, the word may have been derived from fatr in the sense of splitting and tearing; for creation, in a sense, tears the curtains of non-being and the .veils of the hidden

The phrase iftar al sa'im, used for the breaking of the fast, also has a similar meaning, for iftar severs the continuity of the fast. This much is sufficient here, for lexical .consideration is not our purpose here

:The tradition refers to the following verse of the Quran

(فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَکَ لِلدِّینِ حَنِیفًا فِطْرَهَ اللَّهِ الَّتِی فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَیْهَا لَا تَبْدِیلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِکَ الدِّینُ الْقَیِّمُ وَلَکِنَّ أَکْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا یَعْلَمُونَ.)

So set thy face to the Din, as a man of pure Faith-God's fitrah upon which He originated mankind. There is no changing God's creation. That is the right Din, but (most men know it not. (۳۰:۳۰

God willing, we shall discuss this fitrah, its characteristics, and the manner in which human nature is based on the principle of tawhid, dividing our discourse in a number .of sections

The Meaning Of Fitrah

It should be known that fitrat Allah, as the condition and state

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.Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi (Akhundi), II, ۱۲, hadith No.۲ -۱

in which God fashioned mankind, refers to the essential condition of their existence. It is something which is present in the very essence of their creation and is inextricably kneaded into the very substance of their nature. God's fitrah is one of His favors with .which He has endowed the human species out of all creatures

Other creatures are either altogether without these attributes, or have been endowed with a weaker degree of them. It should be remembered that though in this tradition, as in some other ahadith, the word fitrah is interpreted as a natural inclination towards tawhid, but this amounts to mentioning one from among a host of .correlatives, or to describing the most significant component of something

This is characteristic of the expositions and interpretations handed down from the Imams(A). Often they cite one of the several meanings that apply to a verse in accordance with the propriety of a context and occasion, leading ignorant persons to imagine that there is a contradiction (between the different interpretations). A proof .of that is the present case

In the above-mentioned verse, Din, which is equated to fitrat Allah, is inclusive of the doctrine of tawhid and other religious teachings as well. In the sahih tradition of 'Abd Allah ibn Sinan, "fitrah" here has been interpreted as al-Islam; in the hasan hadith narrated by Zurarah from Abu Ja'far —Imam al-Baqir (A)— it is defined as ma'ri fah :(knowledge of God); and in the well-known hadith

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الفِطْرَهِ.

Every child is

.born on the fitrah

Fitrah is placed in opposition to tahawwud (being a Jew), tanassur (being a Christian), and tamajjus (being a Zoroastrian). From this it becomes obvious that fitrah does not exclusively mean tawhid; rather it includes all the true teachings which God Almighty .has ingrained in the nature of His slaves

Laws Of Human Nature

We know that there is not a single soul outside the laws of nature, for they are the essential conditions of human existence and the elemental forms which are innate to human nature and creation. No one escapes them; the ignorant and the learned, the barbarian and the civilized, the dwellers of cities and the inhabitants of deserts-all share it equally. None of the factors, such as diversity of customs, religious traditions .and ways, can affect them or interfere with their working

The differences of geographical region, climate, association, opinion, which affect everything- even rational verities - and create disparity and diversity of all sorts, have no effect whatsoever on the essentials of nature. The disparity of intelligence and the strength and weakness of understanding do not affect it. Anything that is not such, is not a law of nature and it should be excluded from the realm of nature. Hence the ayah states, (فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا), He originated man kind in accordance with it— that is, no— :specific group or race is meant. The verse further says

(لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ.)

.There is no changing God's creation

It is not changed by anything, like other factors which change according to habit

.and custom and other such things

But what is astonishing is that in spite of being uniform regarding their natural instincts, from the beginning of the world until the present, people have been generally ignorant of the uniformity of their nature. They imagine that it varies, unless they are made aware of its uniform and unchangeable quality. It is only then that they can understand that there has been unity despite apparent disparity. God willing, we will clarify this point further at a later stage. However the verse refers to this point :when it says

(وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.)

.But most men know it not

From what has been said till now, it may be inferred that the laws of nature are the most self-evident of all self-evident truths. Because amongst all rational principles there does not exist such a law which is not contradicted even by a single individual, and such a thing is the most evident of logical necessities and the most self-evident of all self-evident realities. And all those things that are its necessary corollaries should .also be among the most evident of logical necessities

Thus, if the doctrine of tawhid, or other related doctrines, are from among the laws of nature and one of its prerequisites, it should be the most manifest of all self-evident :truths and the most evident of manifest necessities, but strangely enough

(أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.)

!Most men know not

Innateness Of Religious Truths

point

Every exegete of the Quran, Sunni or Shi'i, has written about the innateness of Din or tawhid in

his own specific way. Here we shall not base our discussion on their opinions. Rather, we shall describe the original ideas of the accomplished 'arif, Shaykh Shahabadi (D)(۱) who was unique in this field, although some of the ideas can be found in the form of allusions in the writings of researchers in the field of 'irfan, and some of them have .occurred to this incapable writer

Let it be known that among God-given instincts one is the belief in the existence of the Sacred and Sublime Source of everything; the second is the belief in It's Unity, i.e. tawhid; the third is the innate belief that that Sacred Being encompasses all perfection; the fourth is the instinctive belief in the Day of Resurrection; and the fifth is the innate faith in nubuwwah (prophethood); the sixth is the instinctive belief in the existence of angels, of holy spirits, in the revelation of scriptures and the path of .Divine guidance

Some of the above-mentioned are laws of nature and some others are their necessary corollaries. The faith in God, the belief in angels, the belief in the revelation of Scriptures, in God-sent Apostles, in the Day of Resurrection, and in the Din-which is firm, stable and straight-is a truth which underlines the entire life of the human species. We shall discuss here some of them which are relevant to the hadith under .consideration, and beseech the Almighty's assistance in this regard

Man's Love Of Perfection .۱

To understand that the belief in the existence of the Sublime and

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For maintaining readability, (D) which is an acronym for "Daama zhilluhu(m)" is used -۱ throughout the book to denote "May God extend his/their shadow." It is used for the .alive urafa, ulama, and awliya

Supreme Source is innate in human nature, one needs to understand certain preliminaries. One of the qualities innate in human nature is the love and yearning for perfection. It is something which pervades the entire chain of humanity's generations and not a single individual in the entire human species can be found without it. No custom or tradition, religious or legal institution can transform or obstruct this .tendency

The natural inclination to seek perfection is so universal that if all the eras of human existence are probed and each of human individuals, no matter to what group or nation he may belong, is questioned, a love of perfection will be found to be part of his .nature and his heart will be found to be pulled towards it

In all the pauses and activities, in all the efforts, endeavors and earnest toils which engage the energies of the individuals of this species in various fields of life, it is the .love of perfection which drives them onwards

Although people vary regarding their identification and understanding of perfection, and although there is the greatest conceivable variance in what they regard as perfect and whom they regard as the beloved, yet each of them, having perceived his beloved in something and deeming it his ideal; turns his attention towards it. He .serves it with all his heart and with the utmost love of which he is capable

Whatever the field to which he belongs and whatever the object of his love, since

he identifies perfection with it, he concentrates his attention upon it. In the same manner, the men of science and crafts, each of them seeks what he considers as perfection and loves what appears to him as the beloved. The same is true of the .other-worldly and of those who give themselves up to reflection and meditation

In brief, all of them are turned towards perfection, and since they see it in a real or imaginary object, they love it earnestly. But it should be remembered that in spite of it all, their infatuation and obsession is really not for those ideals or objects which they imagine to be their beloved. The object of their love and the ka'bah of their hopes is not that which they have fancied. For, if he were to ponder over his nature, he will realize that to whatever object his heart is devoted, if he attains something superior to it his heart turns away from the original ideal and towards another, a higher one. And when he attains that higher one, he turns towards one which is higher and more perfect, and the fire of eagerness grows more intense day by day and his heart does .not settle down at any one of the stages

For example, if you are in love with physical beauty and see it in some beauty, your heart drives you towards her abode and alley. But if you happen to see a face more beautiful, and you find it to

be so, you will inevitably turn your attention towards it, or, at least, both of them will now hold your attention, and the fire of your passion will not cool down. Your condition is that of the man who said, “I haven’t a penny but would buy the entire estate,” and .you would desire to possess every beauty

Not only this, even a probability may excite your eagerness. If you have an inkling that there is someone prettier in a certain place, your heart may take you on a journey to that place and your state of mind will be like him who said, “Though in the midst of the crowd, my heart is somewhere else.” Mere wish will add to your eagerness. If you listen to the descriptions of Paradise and about the enticing beauties therein, even though, God forbid, you should be a disbeliever in it, nevertheless, your natural instinct will make you say, “ O that such a heaven did exist and such lovely dames ”.would fall to my share

In the same manner, a man who seeks perfection in domination, power and expansion of territories and develops eagerness for such things, if he is given the possession of one country, he will turn towards another; when that too comes under his domination, he will desire for some more territory. If he is given a quarter of the earth, he will try to own the remaining ones also. Rather, the intensity of his desire ,grows more and more

and if the whole planet is brought under his domination, he will contemplate about the .possibility of expanding it to other spheres of the cosmos as well

His heart views the celestial spheres with the desire of conquest: "O that man could fly towards those worlds, that I could annex them to my empire." Similar is the case of men of science and craft and that of the entire human species. Whatever the activity and field of their concern, their eagerness grows with achievement and is directed towards the higher degrees of perfection. The more they progress and advance, the more their eagerness grows for the higher degrees of perfection; its fire is never .extinguished and becomes more intense every day

Thus, this light of nature guides us to the fact that the hearts of all the members of human species, from the people inhabiting far-flung regions of the world to the dwellers of civilized countries, from believers in materialism to the followers of various religious creeds, all yearn by nature and from the core of their hearts to attain .immaculate perfection

They long for an absolute beauty and perfection which has no defect, for a knowledge that has no trace of ignorance in it, for a power acid domination that is not accompanied with impotence and weakness, for a life that has no death, and, ultimately, the Absolute Perfection that is the beloved of everyone. All the existents and the entire human species declare unanimously with one heart and in

eloquent and lucid terms: We are lovers of Absolute Perfection; we are enamored to Absolute Beauty and Majesty; we are in search of Absolute Knowledge and Absolute .Power

Does anyone know of any being in the entire realm of existence, or in the spheres of fancy and imagination, or in the realm of rational abstractions, which possesses the attributes of absolute perfection and absolute beauty, except the Sacred Essence of the Supreme Majestic Source of the cosmos? Does anybody know of any absolute, ?immaculate beauty, except that of the Absolute Beloved

O wanderers of the valley of regret! O the lost ones in the wilderness of error! Rather, O lovers of the lamp of Absolute Beauty! O Seekers of the immaculate and the eternal Beloved! Look again into the book of your nature; turn the pages of the book of your :being. Look, the pen of Divine creation has written into it

(إِنِّی وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِی لِلَّذِی فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِیفًا.)

.I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth

(فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِی فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَیْهَا.)

(It is) God’s nature upon which He originated mankind. (۶:۷۹; ۳۰:۳۰)

:That nature is innate attention to the Absolute Beloved, and it is unchanging

(لَا تَبْدِیلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ.)

It is a nature which seeks the knowledge (ma’rifah) of God. How long will you lavish this natural God-gifted love and this trust of God on this or that beloved on account of your misconceived ideas? If the object of your love were these imperfect beauties ,and these finite perfections

then why doesn't the fire of your love subside after reaching them and why does the flame of your love grow fiercer on attaining them? Now wake up from the slumber, receive the glad tiding, and rejoice that you have a beloved who has no decline, no defect, no infirmity. The Light you seek is one whose brilliance illuminates the :Universe

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (۲۴:۳۵

لَوْ دَلَّيْتُمْ بِحَبْلٍ إِلَى الأَرْضِينَ السُّفْلَى لَهَبَطْتُمْ عَلَى اللهِ.

.Your Beloved is such that He encompasses everything

Thus, this actual love of yours seeks the Actual Beloved. It cannot be an imaginary beloved of your fancy, since every imaginary thing is imperfect, and your nature yearns for perfection. Thus an actual lover and an actual love is not possible without an actual beloved. And there is no other beloved except the Perfect Being, towards whom human nature is directed. Hence the prerequisite for the love of absolute perfection is the existence of the Absolutely Perfect Being. And, as mentioned earlier, the laws of nature and their necessary correlatives are the clearest, the most self-evident and the most obvious of prepositions. Hence it has been said:

(أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(Can there be doubt concerning God the Creator of the heavens and the earth?! (۱۴:۱۰

The Innateness Of Divine Attributes .۲

That the belief in the unity of the Divine Essence is innate and so is the belief that the Divine Being encompasses all the attributes of perfection became known in the above section; here we shall

.prove this in a different manner

It should be known to you that one of the characteristics of the nature upon which God has fashioned mankind is a loathing for imperfection. Man is by nature averse to .everything he perceives as defective and faulty

Thus imperfection and defectiveness are repulsive to human nature, for it is inclined towards absolute perfection. Now, the pole of attraction of human nature should be one and unique, because everything capable of plurality and everything made up of parts is imperfect and defective. Plurality is always associate with finitude, (which is a defect), and everything that is defective is repelled by human nature, which is not .attracted towards it

The presence of these two natures-that is, the nature of attraction towards perfection and the nature of repulsion towards defectiveness-not only posits the principle of tawhid, it also pits that the Being of God encompasses every perfection .and that It is free from every defect

The blessed Surat al-Tawhid, which is about the Being of God, the Exalted and the Supreme, relates, in the words of our revered Shaykh, may my soul be his ransom, to .the Ipseity of the Absolute, which is the pole of attraction of the human nature

At the outset of the surah, it is referred to as huwa (He), followed by the six attributes mentioned in the following verses. Since His sacred Essence has an absolute ipseity (huwiyyah) (an absolute ipseity must be absolutely perfect; otherwise it is a finite ipseity), the Divine

Being encompasses all perfections. ‘Allah’, (which follows the pronoun huwa in the surah), shows that in spite of encompassing all perfections, It is simple (basit); . otherwise It would not have an absolute ipseity

Thus, He is ahad (unique) and His ahadiyyah (uniqueness) necessitates His wahidiyyah (oneness). And since absolute ipseity includes all perfections and is free from all defects-which originate in finite ipseity He is Samad (Eternal, the End, Goal and Refuge of every thing) and is not vacuous. On account of His being absolute ipseity, nothing is begotten or separated from Him, nor is He Himself separated from anything. He is lam yalid wa lam yulad, i.e. He begetteth not, nor was begotten; rather, He is the Source of everything and the End to which all existents return without having separated from Him, for separation necessitates defectiveness. Absolute Ipseity has no equal either, since absolute perfection precludes recurrence. Thus, the blessed Surat al-Tawhid is about the laws of human nature and is .concerned with the attributes of the Divine Being

Innateness Of The Belief In Resurrection .۳

Here we shall discuss the innateness of the belief in Resurrection (al-ma’ad) as something ingrained in human nature. Like the other beliefs dealt with in the previous sections, it can be proved in a number of ways. Here we shall mention only some of .them

Know that one of the God-given innate tendencies that are ingrained in the nature of the entire human species is the love of comfort. If all the epochs of human existence-- from civilized existence to barbarian

subsistence, from eras of piety to that of pagan rebellion-are studied and if all the different kinds of individuals-from the learned to the ignorant, from the noble to the mean, and from the savage to the urbanized-are questioned as to the aim of all their various attachments and pursuits and their diverse desires, and if they are asked about the purpose of their hardships and labors, all will unanimously answer in one voice with the unambiguous tongue of nature that whatever we desire is for the sake .of our comfort

They will say that the ultimate goal and the purpose underlying all their aspirations and hopes is absolute comfort, untainted with labor, toil and distress. Since such a toilless, painless comfort is the goal of all, everyone imagines that lost comfort to lie in some thing and develops an interest in every such thing which he believes to be associated with that desired goal. This, in spite of the fact that such an absolute comfort is not to be found in any part of this world of ephemeral existence, nor is such .an undisturbed peace and rest possible here

All the bounties and blessings of this world are mixed with tiresome effort and exhausting toil. All the pleasures of the world are surrounded with unnerving pains. Pain and agony, anguish and sorrow, anxiety and grief prevail all over the world. Throughout the entire history of human existence, not a single individual is to be seen whose pains and sufferings are equal

to his comforts and whose joys and blessings are equal to his sorrows, distresses and toils, let alone the possession of untainted comfort and undisturbed rest.

Accordingly, the ultimate human goal is not to be found in this world, and no natural, inherent and actual love-and that too a love which pervades the entire species-is possible without the existence of an actual beloved. Hence, there should exist such a world in the realm of existence where comforts will not be adulterated with labor and pain, whose ease and repose be absolute and pure, unmixed by pain, whose joys should be pure, unmarred by grief and suffering. That world is the House of Divine bounty (dar al-na'im), the world of the manifestation of His magnanimity.

That world can also be posited by means of the freedom-loving nature of man and the insistence of the human will, which are ingrained in the nature of every human individual. Since the material forces of this world and the conditions therein, with its impediments and restrictions, are opposed to human freedom and contrary to the human will, there should be a world in the realm of existence where man's will can be influential and whose material forces are not opposed to the dictates of the human will. Man would be there a free actor, accomplishing the aspirations of his sovereign will, a sovereignty which is demanded by his nature.

Thus the aspects of the innate love of comfort and love of freedom are two natural tendencies that

have been embedded by God in the unchanging nature of the human being. They are the two wings with which man flies towards the higher kingdom of heaven and into .the Nearness of God

There are certain other matters which are not of immediate relevance to these pages. There are other natural tendencies in man which posit other Divine teachings, such as the affirmation of prophethood, the raising of Divine apostles and the descent of the scriptures, and so on. Each of the above-mentioned natural tendencies proves all the sacred doctrines, but we have confined our discussion in order not to digress much from the main topic, which is exposition of the glorious tradition at hand. Hitherto our discussion showed that the knowledge of the Source, Its Perfection and .Unity, and that of the Hereafter is innate in human nature. And all praise is God's

(Twelfth Hadith: Contemplation (Tafakkur

point

بِسَنَدی الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلی مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَیْهِ، عَنْ عَلِیِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِیمَ، عَنْ أَبِیهِ، عَنِ النَّوْفَلِیِّ، عَنِ السُّکُونِیِّ، عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: کَانَ أَمِیرُ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: نَبِّهْ بِالتَّفَکُّرِ قَلْبَکَ وَجَافِ عَنِ اللَّیْلِ جَنْبَکَ وَاتَّقِ اللهَ رَبَّکَ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni), from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from al-Nawfali, from al-Sakuni, from Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam al Sadiq) (A) that he said: Amir al-Mu'minin (A) used to say: "Arouse your heart to contemplation; keep your side clear (off the night; and be heedful towards your Lord."(١

Exposition

The phrase kana yaqul (used to say) has a meaning different from qala (said) or yaqul

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.Usul al-Kafi (Akhundi, ed. by 'Ali' Akbar Ghaffiri), II, ۵۴ -١

says), as it indicates continuation and perpetuation. It shows that Amir al-Mu'minin) (A) repeatedly used to utter these words. The word tanabbuh means 'to arouse', 'to warn', 'to call attention to', and 'to awaken from sleep.' Here all of these meanings are suitable, for the hearts are in a state of neglectfulness and sleep prior to contemplation, and they come out of this state by means of it. Sleep and awakening, unconsciousness and consciousness are different for the realm of the body and the .kingdom of the soul

Many a time the outward eye is awake, the corporeal personality is conscious but the inner eye and the inward vision is deep asleep, and the spiritual regions and the domain of the soul are heedless and unconscious. Tafakkur (contemplation, intellection) is the activity of the intellect. It is the reordering of known matters for the purpose of reaching hitherto unknown conclusions. It includes the kind of contemplation which is one of the characteristics of mystics and wayfarers of the :Path. Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari has described it in these words

إعْلَمْ أَنَّ التَّفَكُّرَ تَلَمُّسُ البَصِيرَهِ لإِسْتِدْرَاكِ البُغْيَه.

Know that contemplation is the inquisitive groping of the inner vision for attaining the (coveted end.(١

It is obvious that ma'rifah (gnosis) is the desired object of the heart. Accordingly, in this hadith also contemplation has a specific sense concerned with the heart and its .life

?What Is Heart

There are various applications and denotations of the word 'heart'. For physicians and the common people it is a tiny piece of

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.Manazil al-sa'irin, I, ٥٧ -١

flesh, whose contractions and expansions cause the flow of blood through arteries and veins, which generates a subtle élan vital. The philosophers (hukama) use it for a certain seat of the psyche (nafs). The urafa assign to it grades (maratib) and stages (maqamat), and to go into their details is not our concern here. In the Holy Quran and the ahadith, it has been used both in its general as well as its particular senses in .different places

:In the verse

(وَبَلَغَتْ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ.)

(The hearts reached to the throats. (۳۳:۱۰

:Heart' is used in the same sense as used by physicians. And in'

(لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا.)

They have hearts wherewith they understand not, and they have eyes wherewith (they see not. (۷:۱۷۹

:It is used in the sense used by the philosophers. And in

(إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ.)

Therein verily is a reminder for him who hath a heart, or giveth ear with full (intelligence. (۵۰:۳۷

.Heart' is used in the same sense as used by the urafa'

In the tradition, tafakkur is used in the sense as is generally used by hukama', but the 'heart' as meant by urafa has no relation to tafakkur, especially on its certain levels, .as those who are familiar with their terminology know well

gives the sense of bu'd, to keep away, to shun, (جَافِ عَنِ اللَّيْلِ جَنْبَكَ جفاً) :In the statement .as given by al-Sihah (جَافَاهُ عَنْهُ فَتَجَافَى عَنِ الفِرَاشِ) and such is its meaning in

Night', here, has been used allegorically for 'bed' and as discussed in detail by the' usuli faqih Aqa Shaykh Rida Isfahani in Jaliyyat al-hal, the avoiding of 'night' refers to getting up from the bed for night prayers God willing, we shall discuss the holy .tradition in a number of sections

Merits Of Contemplation

It should be known that there is a great merit in contemplation. Contemplation is the key to the doors of ma'rifah and to the treasure chests of knowledge and excellence. It is the necessary and the surest first step on the path of genuine humanness. It has been highly commended and glorified by the Glorious Quran and in traditions, and one .who abandons it has been censured and denounced

:In al-Kafi it is reported from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that

أَفْضَلُ العِبَادَهِ إِدْمَانُ التَّفَكُّرِ فِى اللهِ وَفِى قُدْرَتِهِ.

(The best form of worship is to contemplate about God and His Power.(۱)

In another hadith, it is stated that an hour's contemplation is better than a night's worship.'(۲) And according to a Prophetic tradition, the contemplation of an hour is better than a year's worship. In another tradition it is stated that an hour's contemplation is better than sixty years of worship (according to another hadith, seventy years). And some traditionists and fuqaha' have even mentioned it as being better than a thousand years of worship. In any case, there are different grades and levels of contemplation, and every grade gives certain results and consequences. .Here we shall mention a few of them

The first kind .۱

.Usul al-Kafi, II, ۵۵ -۱

.Usul al-Kafi, II, ۵۵ -۲

of contemplation is about God, His Names, Attributes and His Perfections, the result of which is the knowledge of His existence and His irradiations (tajalliyat) from which the archetypes (ayan) and the manifestations (mazahir) emerge. And this is the most superior level of contemplation which yields the sublimest of the kinds of knowledge, and the firmest of the arguments (burhan); for thinking about the essence of the Cause and meditating on the Absolute Cause imparts knowledge about Him and the understanding of the effects. Such is the outline of the revelations on the hearts of the Truthful (siddiqun), and it is for this reason that it is called burhan al-siddiqin, the Proof of the Truthful; since the Truthful observe the Names and the Attributes, and view the first essences (a'yan) and manifestations (mazahir) in the mirror of the Names .through the witness of the Essence

The reason, however, that this type of proof is called burhan al-siddiqin is that if a Truthful one (siddiq) wishes to set forth his observations in the form of a proof and give his gnostic, intuitive experience the apparel of words, it would appear in this form; not that anyone who gains the knowledge of the Essence and its irradiations through this proof becomes one of the Truthful, or that the knowledge of the Truthful belongs to the category of proofs, even especial ones. How far from the truth to imagine that their knowledge is of the category of contemplation, or that their cognitions are

!like arguments and their premises

As long as the heart is covered within the wrapping of arguments and one is in the stage of contemplation, one has not yet reached even the first grade of the Truthful. And when the thick curtains of knowledge and proof are set aside and contemplation brushed aside, it is at the extremity of the Path drat there, without the mediation of contemplation - in fact without any means or agency whatsoever - that he ultimately succeeds in viewing the glory and beauty of the Absolute at the end of his voyage; it is then that he experiences perpetual and everlasting delight. He transcends the world and everything therein, covered under the mantle of the Almighty to remain existent .in total annihilation

Nothing remains of him, and he passes into absolute oblivion, save that Divine favor should take him back to his realm and to the regions of (relative) being, in accordance with the capacity of his unchanging essence (al-'ayn al-thabitah). In the state of this return, the spheres of Divine glory and beauty are revealed to him, and he perceives .(the meaning of) the Names and the Attributes in the mirror of the Essence

Through that he witnesses his own unchanging essence and everything that is under His shelter and protection, and discovers the tracks of the manifestations and the ways of recourse to the heart's exterior. Then he is conferred with the robes of prophethood and the difference of the stations of the

apostles and prophets becomes evident to him. The vastness or narrowness of the circle of prophethood and that of those from whom the prophet is raised and those towards whom he is sent are revealed to him. And to enlarge on this topic further is not proper for these pages. So we shall leave it here and part, too, with the theme of burhan al-siddiqin, as it needs a preparatory introduction with its elaborate details.

The Desirable And The Forbidden Contemplation On The Divine Essence

It should be known that what we said about the possibility of contemplation on the Essence, the Names and the Attributes may lead the ignorant to imagine that it is forbidden in accordance with certain riwayat, knowing not that that which is forbidden is to attempt to fathom the quality and depths of the Essence, as is clear from the traditions.'(١)

Sometimes those who are not capable of such (otherwise desirable) contemplation are also forbidden from reflecting on certain kinds of ma'arif which require initiation into certain subtleties. The hukama' confirm both of these points. The impossibility of fathoming the Essence is demonstrated in their writings, and the prohibition on contemplation on it is acknowledged by all of them. Also the conditions of entry into these sciences and the prohibition of the unworthy from learning them is also mentioned in their books; it is a customary advice which is mentioned by them either in the beginning or at the end of their works. For instance, the two great philosophers of Islam and authorities in this field,

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١- Al-Mahajjat al-bayda ; VIII, ١٩٣: تَفَكَّرُوا فِی خَلْقِ اللهِ وَلا تَتَفَكَّرُوا فِی اللهِ، فَإِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَقْدِرُوا قَدْرَهُ.

Shaykh Bu 'Ali Sina and Sadr al-Muta'allihin (R) have stated this at the end of al-'Isharat(1) and at the beginning of al-'Asfar.(2)

They have given eloquent counsels in this regard. But to contemplate the Essence for positing the principle of al-tawhid and affirming Its transcendence (al-tanzih) and sanctity was the ultimate goal and purpose of the sending of the prophets and the cherished end of the urafa. The Holy Quran and the sacred ahadith are loaded with the knowledge of the Essence, Its Perfections and the Divine Names.

Reliable books of traditions, like Usul al-Kafi and al-Tawhid of al Shaykh al-Saduq, also do not forbid contemplation for the purpose of affirmation of the Essence, the Names and the Attributes. The difference between the scriptures and traditions of the prophets and the writings of the philosophers is regarding their terminology and their synoptic or elaborate treatment of the subject, as is the case with the difference between fiqh and traditions.

But the calamity is that certain ignorant persons have appeared in the garb of scholars during the last few centuries, who, being bereft of the knowledge of the Quran and the Sunnah, consider their sheer ignorance as the sole proof of the vanity of the knowledge of al-mabda' and al-ma'ad. Such a man for the sake of promoting his trade, labels these ma'arif, which were the ultimate goal of the apostles and the Awliya' (A) of God and with whose description the entire Book of God and the traditions of the Imams

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۱- Al- Isharat wa al-tanbihat (Tehran: Haydari), III, ۴۱۹.

۲- Al- Asfar al-'arba'ah (Dar al-Ma'arif al-Islamiyyah), I, ۱۰.

.of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) are replete, as haram

Not sparing any charge and calumny against those who pursue these ma'arif, he diverts the hearts of the creatures of God from the knowledge of al-mabda' and al-ma'ad, in addition to sowing the seeds of discord and disharmony in the community of Muslims. When asked about the reason for all this takfir (calling someone kafir) and :tafsiq, (calling someone fasiq), he immediately clings to the tradition

لا تَتَفَكَّرُوا فِى ذَاتِ اللهِ.

.(Do not contemplate upon the Essence (of God

The ignorance and the error of this wretch is for two reasons: Firstly, he believes that the hukama' contemplate on the Essence, whereas they consider its intellection as impossible and probing deep into its mysteries as forbidden, and this itself is one of the established issues of their discipline. Secondly, having misunderstood the meaning of the tradition, he believes that not a single word be uttered regarding the .Sacred Essence

Here we shall cite some of the related traditions and, in our humble capacity, try to reconcile them, leaving the Judgment to the (reader's sense of) justice. Though this makes us digress from the proposed exposition of the hadith - our original goal -it is essential for eliminating doubts and refuting misconceptions. The following tradition is :mentioned in al-Kafi

عَنْ أَبِى بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامِ: تَكَلَّمُوا فِى خَلْقِ اللهِ وَلا تَتَكَلَّمُوا فِى اللهِ، فَإِنَّ الكَلامَ فِى اللهِ لا يَزْدَادُ صَاحِبُهُ إلا تَحَيُّراً.

Abu Basir reports Abu Ja'far (A) as having said: Speak (takallamu) about

the creation of God, and do not speak about God (fi Allah), for discourse about God will (bring nothing but confusion (tahayyur) to the discourser.(١)

This tradition itself indicates that the purpose of the prohibition is to discourage discourse aimed at fathoming the depths (iktinah) of the Essence and Its kayfiyyah (quality) with a view to discovering its cause. Otherwise, discoursing about the Essence with a view to affirming It, Its Perfections, Its Unity and Transcendence does not cause confusion. It is also possible that the prohibition here relates to such persons in whom discourse about these matters will cause perplexity and confusion. The late muhaddith al-Majlisi (R) has allowed both of these possibilities without elaborating them, but he gives more weight to the first one. Another tradition of al-Kafi states:

وَفِی رِوَایَهٍ أُخْرَی عَنْ حَرِیزٍ: تَکَلَّمُوا فِی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَلا تَتَکَلَّمُوا فِی ذَاتِ اللهِ.

From Hariz, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Discuss everything, but do not (discuss the Essence of the Almighty."(٢)

There are other traditions which are identical or close in import to this riwayah, and to cite them all is not essential. Another tradition of al-Kafi states:

عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِیَّاکُمْ وَالتَّفَکُّرَ فِی اللهِ وَلَکِنْ إِذَا أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْظُرُوا إِلَی عَظَمَتِهِ فَانْظُرُوا إِلَی عَظِیمِ خَلْقِهِ.

Abu Ja'far (A) said, "Beware of tafakkur in God. But if you wish to view His grandeur, (observe the great of His creations."(٣)

Apparently, this riwayah also seems to forbid probing into the reality of the Essence, for the tradition adds that if

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1- Usul al-Kafi, I, ٩٢, hadith ١.
2- Usul al-Kafi, I, ٩٢, hadith ١.
3- Usul al-Kafi, I, ٩٣, hadith ٧.

someone wants to perceive the glory of the Almighty he should infer it from the grandeur of His creation. This kind of parabolic approach is intended for various types .of persons whose knowledge of God is derived through the means of the creation

This and other such traditions which appear to forbid discourse and contemplation on God by themselves support our claim, which is expressly confirmed by the following :tradition of al-Kafi on contemplation

أَفْضَلُ العِبَادَهِ إِدْمَانُ التَّفَكُّرِ فِی اللهِ وَفِی قُدْرَتِهِ.

(The best form of worship is to contemplate about God and His Power.(۱

Accordingly, contemplation on God for positing His Essence and contemplating His Power, His Names and Attributes is not only not prohibited, but is the most superior :kind of worship. Another tradition of al-Kafi states

سُئِلَ عَلِیُّ بْنُ الحُسَیْنِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ عَنِ التَّوْحِیدِ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلِمَ أَنَّهُ یَکُونُ فِی آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ أَقْوَامٌ مُتَعَمِّقُونَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللهُ تَعَالَی: (قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ أَحَدٌ.) وَالآیَاتِ مِنْ سُورَهِ الحَدِیدِ إِلَی قَوْلِهِ: (وَهُوَ عَلِیمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ.) فَمَنْ رَامَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِکَ فَقَدْ هَلَکَ.

Ali (A) ibn al-Husayn (A) was questioned about tawhid; he answered "Verily, God' Almighty knew that during the Last Age there would be a people of profound thinking. Hence the Almighty revealed Surat al-Tawhid and the verses of the Surat al-Hadid up to 'And God is the Knower of all that is in the hearts.'(۲) So whosoever goes beyond (that will perish."(۳

This shows that these verses about tawhid and tanzih, the verses about the emergence and the return of the creation mentioned

۱- Usul al-Kafi, II, ۵۵.

۲- The first six ayahs of Surat al-Hadid.

۳- Usul al-Kafi, I, ۹۱, hadith ۳.

therein, are for those who contemplate profoundly. Can then anyone still claim that contemplating on God Almighty is prohibited? What ‘arif and Hakim has brought anything that goes beyond the commencing verses of the Surat al-Hadid? The ultimate of their achievement is that:

(سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Allah.

Is there any better way of describing God Almighty and the aspects of His Sacred Essence than the verse:

(هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.)

He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward, and He is the Knower of all things. (۵۷:۳)

By the Life of the Beloved, had there been nothing besides this verse in the Glorious Book of God, it would have been sufficient for the men of heart!

If one were to consider the Book of God and the sermons and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and his infallible vicegerents (A), one shall notice that no ‘arif or Hakim has said anything on any of the conceivable sub-issues of the Divine teachings that goes beyond these; all their statements are replete with the description (tawsif) of the Almighty and full of arguments about His sacred Essence and Attributes, so that every class of scholars benefits from them according to the capacity of its comprehension.

Then all of these traditions show that contemplating and meditating on the Essence is forbidden on a certain level, which is to probe into the inmost mysteries (kunh) of the Essence

:and Its Quality (kayfiyyah), as stated in this tradition of al-Kafi

مَنْ نَظَرَ فِی اللهِ کَیْفَ هُوَ هَلَکَ.

(Whosoever contemplates in God to see how He is, perishes.(۱)

Moreover, the traditions forbidding contemplation and those enjoining it, when reconciled, give the conclusion that a group of people who do not possess the strength of giving ear to philosophical arguments (burhan), having no capacity of entering into such discussions, are forbidden from doing so, and there are indications in the riwayat which testify to this. But as for those who have an aptitude for it, it is not .only proper but is the highest form of worship

In any case, we have digressed completely from our proposed theme, but there was no way we could avoid examining those degenerate views and the kind of calumnies, displeasing to God, which have acquired circulation during recent times on tongues, with the hope that it will make some effect on some hearts, and if one person were to accept this it would be sufficient for me. And praise is God's and to Him do we .complain

وَالحَمْدُ لله وَإلَیْهِ المُشْتَکی.

Contemplation On Creation

Another level of contemplation is reflecting on the subtleties of creation, its perfection and refinement, to the extent that it is in human power. Such contemplation leads to the intellection of its Perfect Source, its Wise Maker, and is a process which is the reverse of the burhan al siddiqin; for, in the latter, the point of departure is the station of God Almighty, glorious is His Name, wherefrom

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, I, ۹۳, hadith ۵.

.(is acquired the knowledge of the manifestations of His Sovereignty (wilayah

Here, however, the point of departure is creation, whereafter is acquired the knowledge of its Source and Maker. This proof (burhan) is for ordinary people, who do not partake of the burhan al-siddiqin. Therefore, perhaps, many of them would negate that the contemplation of God can bring the knowledge of Him and that the knowledge of the Origin can lead to the knowledge of the creation.

Hence, the contemplation of the subtleties and the marvels of creation and the firmness and finesse of the system of creation belongs to the category of beneficial knowledge; it is the most meritorious of the actions of the heart and superior to all worships, since its result is the noblest of all results. Although in all forms of devotional rites (‘ibadat) the main aim and the real secret is the acquisition of transcendental knowledge (ma’arif), yet the likes of us find no access to such secrets and such results. They are for their own people, to whom every devotional rite is like a grain of one or several revelations.

In any case, man has not been able to acquire the real knowledge of the subtleties and secrets of creation. So subtle are its foundations and so firm its design, so beautiful and perfectly planned is its system that if we consider any creature, however insignificant and humble it should appear to be, with all the scientific development acquired during centuries of studies man has

been unable to discover even one of its thousand secrets, let alone the majesty of the cosmic system of creation whose intricacies and mysteries are beyond the reaches of our vision and inaccessible to our imperfect, limited ideas. Now we shall draw your attention to one of the subtleties of creation which is relatively near to understanding .and comprehension and is considered to lie in the realm of the sensible

The Earth And The Sun: Two Masterpieces Of Creation

My dear, observe and reflect on the relationship between the earth and the sun, the fixed distance and the suitable speed with which the earth spins on its axis and revolves in its orbit around the sun, causing day and night and the seasons. What a perfection of creative skill and what a work of immaculate wisdom it is that had it been not exactly so - that is had the earth been a little away or nearer to the sun - there would not have been any vegetation and animal life, on account of chilling cold .due to the former and excessive heat due to the latter

And, similarly, had the earth remained static, there would not have been any days and nights and seasons either, and the earth would have been without any trace of life .despite possessing everything else to support life

Yet He did not suffice at this; He made its north furthest from the sun (in the northern hemisphere), so as to ensure that excessive heat does no harm to the creatures; the point nearest to

the sun was situated towards the south, so that coldness should not harm the inhabitants of the earth. This was also not enough; the moon, which also influences the earth's creatures, was assigned a different course than the earth, in such a way that when the sun is the northern region of the earth, the moon appears in the southern, and vice versa.

This was for the sake of the utmost benefit of their positions relative to the earth. These are essentially sensible phenomena, yet to encompass their subtleties and secrets is not possible for anybody but their omnipotent Creator.

Why should we go so far ? If one contemplates his own creation, according to the scope of his knowledge and capability, beginning with the external senses he will see that they have been contrived according to the kind of sensations and sense perceptions they receive. For every group of sensible objects a separate faculty of perception has been created, and that too with what astounding propriety and skill! And for matters of a supra-sensible nature, which cannot be perceived through the outward senses, internal senses have been fashioned to perceive them.

Let alone the knowledge of the soul and its spiritual faculties, which the human intellect cannot comprehend, and contemplate upon the human body, its anatomy, its physical constitution and the functioning of each and every external and internal organ. See what a wonderful system and what a striking order they constitute!

In spite of a hundred centuries of scientific study,

man has not been able to understand a thousandth fraction of it, and all the scientists declare their inability in this regard in unambiguous terms, although this body of man is no more than an insignificant speck in comparison to other creatures on the earth's crust, and the earth with all its inhabitants is of little significance as compared with the solar system and our complete solar system is of no consequence when compared with other solar systems and galaxies; and all these macro and micro systems are parts of a disciplined and orderly system, no speck of which can be found faulty by anyone and all the human intellects are unable to understand even a single secret of .its myriad recondite subtleties and secrets

Does your intellect still need something more after this reflection to believe that an Omniscient, Omnipotent and All-Wise Being, who does not resemble any other being ?in anything, has created all these creatures with their firm orderliness and subtlety

(أَفِی اللَّهِ شَکٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

Can there be any doubt concerning God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? ((۱۴:۱۰

All this orderly and systematic artistry, whose general laws no human mind can comprehend, has not come into existence by itself and spontaneously. Blind be the inner eye that fails to perceive the Truth and cannot observe its beauty in these creatures! Perish the man who is skeptical and doubtful despite seeing all these effects and signs! But, what else can helpless man, captivated by fantasies, do? If

you take out your rosary and claim that its beads got assembled on the thread by themselves, without anybody arranging them, everyone will laugh at your .intelligence

You will invite a calamity if you take out your pocket watch and make similar claims about it; if you do such a thing will you not have stuck off your name from the list of the sane and wouldn't all the sane people of the world consider you a lunatic? If one who considers this simple and small mechanical system to originate without a cause and as being outside causality is considered insane and is likely to be stripped of all the rights belonging to men of reason, what is to be done with the person who claims not the whole cosmic system but even man and the complex system of his body and soul alone to have come into existence by itself? Is he still to be reckoned among men ?of reason? What fool is more stupid than such a man

(قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ!)

(Perish man! What has made him an unbeliever? (۸۰:۱۷

Death to him whom knowledge cannot revive and who is drowned in the sea of his !own error

Contemplation On The States Of The Soul

One of the levels of contemplation is meditation on the states of the soul, which is of immense benefit being the source of vast transcendental knowledge. Here we intend to discuss two benefits: one is the knowledge of the Day of Resurrection, and the other is the knowledge of (the necessity of) prophethood

and revealed scriptures - that is, of general prophethood (al-nubuwwat al-'ammah) and systems of Divine Law (sharayi' haqqah). One of the issues pertaining to the soul is its state of independence (from the body), a problem which has been given more significance than any other philosophical issue by all the eminent hukama about which they have given numerous proofs and explanations. Here we are not in a position to offer an elaborate proof of this. We shall confine ourselves to mentioning some simple .preliminaries and then return to our subject

All the physicians, scientists and anatomists unanimously agree that all the human organs, from the pia mater - which is the centre of sense perceptions and the stage for the manifestation of all psychic faculties - to the coarser parts and organs of the body, weaken, deteriorate and decline after the age of thirty or thirty-five years. We ourselves have experienced how weakness and sluggishness overtake all the organs .of the body after that age

However, at the same time, that is at the age of thirty and forty and after that, the spiritual faculties and intellectual perceptions become more refined and gain in growth and strength. This implies that the rational faculties are not physically based, for had they been corporeal like other physical faculties, they would also have .declined

It is not right to imagine that it is the extent of intellectual activity as well as experience which strengthen the intellectual faculties, because all the physical faculties weaken and

decline despite prolonged use and do not grow in strength and perfection. This proves .that the intellectual faculty is not physically rooted

It is also improper to say that the faculty of intellect also declines with age, because, firstly, none of the physical faculties grows strong till middle age, so that it may be said that a certain organ of the body has been the centre of intellectual perception that grows in strength till middle age and then becomes weaker, thus rendering weak .the faculty of intellect as well

Secondly, the weakness which continues into middle age is associated with rational thought, which is either a faculty present in the body or is dependent on the physical faculties. The purely intellectual and higher faculties continue to become stronger than ever before during middle age, although their expression and outward manifestation may be lesser. In short, the strength of the faculty of intellectual .perception at the age of forty or fifty years is enough for proving our contention

Moreover, every such faculty which is nearer to the physical and corporeal domain is inclined to deteriorate and decay more rapidly, and that which is more removed from it weakens more latterly. But the powers belonging to the world of the transcendent and the celestial become stronger and their vitality increases. This proves that the soul is not corporeal and physical in nature. Since the properties, effects and activities of the soul are opposed to the properties, effects and activities of the purely corporeal organs, it

proves that the soul is not corporeal in nature. For instance, through prior knowledge we know that a body does not accept more than one form. If it is to receive another .form, it will have to part with the form it earlier had

For example, if a picture is drawn on a paper, another picture cannot be painted on that page as long as the first picture is not erased completely. This principle is applicable to all bodies; but for the soul, while one form is impressed on it, other totally different forms can also be stamped on it without the first form being wiped out. Every corporeal body can receive only finite forms, whereas the soul can receive .infinite forms, and it is for this reason that it can posit infinity

Also, every corporeal body, if it loses one form, that form cannot be restored to it without a renewed cause; but in the case of the soul, any form, after having left it, may return to it without any resumption of the cause. This shows that the soul is opposed to all corporeal bodies regarding properties, effects and action. Hence it has a non-corporeal existence of its own and does not belong to the category of bodies .and physical objects

Anything that is non-corporeal is not subject to decay - as has been demonstrated in its own place - because decay cannot occur without matter, and the non-corporeal is independent of matter. Matter is the precondition of corporeal

bodies; therefore, decay is not possible for the soul. Hence we come to the conclusion that the soul does not weaken and decay or is destroyed with the weakening, decay or destruction of the body, or after separating from it. It remains in another world and there is no death and extinction for it; this is a spiritual resurrection for the souls, prior to the Day of Resurrection, when they are united with the bodies by the will of God.

Now we reach the point of absolute affirmation of Resurrection, and stand opposed to those who negate it absolutely. From these preliminaries it should be clear that there is health and disease, reform and corruption, knowledge and wretchedness for souls, and to discover their source and to know the secrets of their corruption and welfare is not possible for anyone except the Holy Essence of the Almighty.

In the perfect system of the cosmos, which is the best of possible systems ordered by the Absolutely Wise and the Omniscient, it is impossible that there should be any negligence regarding the education of mankind as to the ways of its felicity and wretchedness, its guidance towards the causes of spiritual soundness and corruption, and the prescription of remedies for curing the soul.

This is because such a negligence would imply a defect either in God's knowledge or His power, either His generosity or His justice, whereas it is known that His Holy Being is free from all these defects. He is absolutely

perfect and absolutely generous. Any neglect providing guidance pointing out the paths of knowledge and wretchedness will imply a great defect in Divine wisdom, which would lead to cosmic disorder and chaos. Therefore, the perfect system necessitates the declaration of the paths of felicity and the road to guidance. This .explanation leads to two clear conclusions

One is that the Shari'ah is the prescription for spiritual maladies and is known to none except the Sacred Being of the Almighty. The other is that it is necessary for God to bring it to the knowledge of man. It is obvious that such a momentous, perfect and precise knowledge, whose apprehension is not possible through the intellectual faculties of men – none of which can grasp either the relationships between tile corporeal and transcendental worlds or the effects of the transcendental forms on the inner depths of the soul – can only be accessible through the agency of wahy or .revelation, that is, by means of Divine teaching

It is clear that every human individual is not worthy of this office and does not have the capability of occupying this station and performing this duty. It is only once in several centuries that one such individual is to be found who is worthy of performing this task and who can undertake such a great mission. God Almighty assigns to him the task of expounding the paths of felicity and wretchedness to humanity, to make them aware of that wherein lies their welfare. This

is general prophethood (al-nubuwwat al-'ammah). Now that we have arrived at this point in our discussion, we may explain a further point which should be considered as .one of self-evident truths

A Conclusive Proof

Now that we know that there should necessarily be a Shari'ah laid down by the Divine Lawgiver for mankind, when we turn to the Shari'ahs prevailing amongst mankind we see that there are three principal ones: the Shari'ah of Jews, the Shari'ah of Christians, and the Shari'ah of Islam. We find that in all the three essential foundations which constitute the basis of all Shari'ahs (of which the first is concerned with the true doctrines and Divine teachings about God's Attributes and His transcendence, the knowledge of angels and the qualities of the prophets (A) and their infallibility, which are the principal and main component of the Shari'ahs; the second is about praiseworthy qualities, purification of the soul and moral excellences; the third is about outward individual and social acts and rites pertaining to political and .civic actions and their like), the Islamic Shari'ah is more complete than the others

Anyone who tries to judge without prejudice will discover that it is incomparable to the others, and there does not exist any religious law pertaining to all the aspects and stages of life more perfect regarding its worldly and otherworldly aspects than this .Law. This is itself the biggest proof in favor of its Divine origin

Accordingly, after affirming the doctrine of universal prophethood and the doctrine that God Almighty

has legislated a Divine Shari'ah for humanity, showing them the path of guidance and bringing them under the cover of one discipline and system, no preliminaries are required for proving the truthfulness of the Islamic Din except for examining it and comparing it with other religious laws on every conceivable level of human need - from righteous qualities and spiritual learning to individual and social responsibilities. :And this is the meaning of the following sacred tradition

الإسْلامُ يَعْلُو وَلا يُعْلَى عَلَيْهِ.

.(Islam surpasses (every creed) and is not surpassed (by anything

This is because the more the intellects of men progress and the more they gain in understanding, they bow their heads in front of its light of guidance when they consider its proofs (hujaj) and arguments (barahin), and no hujjah in the world can .refute them

The result of our arguments relating to the positing of the prophetic mission of the Seal of Prophethood (S) is that in the same way as the creative perfection manifest in the creation of the cosmos and its perfect arrangement and order directs us towards the intellection of a Being who has ordered it and whose omniscience encompasses all its particulars, subtleties and grandeurs, the perfection of the Shari'ah - whose perfect order and methodical finesse is capable of guaranteeing all the material and spiritual, this-worldly and otherworldly, collective and individual needs - guides us to the fact that the system of this Shari'ah has been ordered by a knowledge which encircles all the needs of the

.human species

And since our intellects tell us that the intellectual faculties of a man whose biography has been written by all the historians of religion and who was an unlettered person brought up in a society devoid of all higher knowledge and virtues, could not have produced such a perfect and systematic Shari'ah. Hence, of necessity, we have to acknowledge that this Shari'ah has a metaphysical and transcendental source, and reached that glorious personage (S) by means of Divine revelation and wahy. And .praise is God's for the clarity of proofs

We had intended to describe another stage of contemplation -the contemplation on this world, and zuhd is its fruit - but since this pen broke its reins in the earlier stages of this discourse making it somewhat lengthier than intended, we shall refrain from .going into it

Virtues Of The Midnight Prayer

:Now remains the exposition of these two phrases of the hadith

جافِ عَنِ اللَّيْلِ جَنْبَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللهَ رَبَّكَ.

(Keep your side clear off the night; and be heedful towards your Lord.(١)

In this blessed pronouncement, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (A), has placed the actions of the heart, contemplative awareness, and the taqwa of God by the side of night vigils and keeping aloof from the bed for the sake of worship. This proves the distinction and merit it commands, and the practice has been greatly glorified in the traditions. The biographies of the Imams of guidance (A), and those of ,great sages and eminent scholars, indicate that they not only assiduously observed it

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.Usul al-Kafi (Akhundi, ed. by 'Ali' Akbar Ghaffiri), II, ۵۴ -١

but attached great importance to the practice of staying awake until the late hours of .night, aside from the aim of worship

There are forty-one ahadith recorded in Wasai'l al-Shi'ah (the greatest of Shi'i books, which is the pivot of the Shi'i legal school and the source book of Shi'i scholars and fuqaha') about the benefits and merits of observing this practice, and there are several ahadith about the undesirability of giving up this habit. There are, of course countless of similar traditions in the books of supplications and prayers, but we shall :quote only a few in the following, as a token of barakah and blessing

عَنِ الكَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُعَاوِیَهَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: کَانَ فِی وَصِیَّهِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ لِعَلِیٍّ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ أَنْ قَالَ: یَا عَلِیُّ، أُوصِیکَ فِی نَفْسِکَ بِخِصَالٍ فَاحْفَظْهَا. ثُمَّ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنْهُ. إِلَی أَنْ قَالَ: وَعَلَیْکَ بِصَلاهِ اللَّیْلِ وَعَلَیْکَ بِصَلاهِ اللَّیْلِ وَعَلَیْکَ بِصَلاهِ اللَّیْلِ.

It is reported in al-Kafi from Mu'awiyah ibn 'Amman who said that he heard Imam al-Sadiq (A) say: "In the wasiyyah addressed to 'Ali (A) by the Prophet (S), he (S) said: "O 'Ali, I enjoin you regarding certain habits that you must safeguard." Then the Prophet (S) prayed, "O God, succor him." Then (continuing his advice) he said, "Observe the midnight prayer. Observe the midnight prayer. Observe the midnight prayer."(۱)

:Its great significance may be understood from the entire tradition

وَعَنِ الخِصَالِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ

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۱ - Al-Kulayni, Rawdat al-Kafi, p.۱۶۲; al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, V, ۲۶۸; al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Man la yahduruhu al-faqih. I, ۴۸۴; al-Kulayni, Furu al al-Kafi, I, ۷۳.

وَسَلَّمَ لِجِبْرَئِيلَ: عِظْنِی. فَقَالَ: یَا مُحَمَّدُ، عِشْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّکَ مَیِّتٌ، وَأَحْبِبْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّکَ مُفَارِقُهُ، وَاعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّکَ مُلاقِیهِ. شَرَفُ الْمُؤْمِنِ صَلاتُهُ بِاللَّیْلِ، وَعِزُّهُ کَفُّهُ عَنْ أَعْرَاضِ النَّاسِ.

In al-Khisal, Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) is reported to have said, “The Prophet (S) asked Jibra’il to exhort him about something. Jibra’il said, “O Muhammad! Live you as you wish, for verily you will die one day. And love whatever you like, for verily you will have to part from it. Act as you wish, for verily you will have to face it. Know that the distinction of a believer lies in his establishing the night vigil and his nobleness lies in refraining from (maligning) the people’s honor.”(۱)

The high degree of its significance can be understood from Jibrail’s especially recommending it to the Messenger of God (S); for had Jibra’il (A) deemed anything else as more important, he would have mentioned it while giving advice.

وَفِی الْمَجَالِسِ؛ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ فِی حَدِیثٍ: فَمَنْ رُزِقَ صَلاةَ اللَّیْلِ مِنْ عَبْدٍ أَوْ أَمَةٍ؛ قَامَ للهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مُخْلِصاً، فَتَوَضَّأَ وُضُوءاً سَابِغاً وَصَلَّی للهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِنِیَّةٍ صَادِقَةٍ وَقَلْبٍ سَلِیمٍ وَبَدَنٍ خَاشِعٍ وَعَیْنٍ دَامِعَةٍ، جَعَلَ اللهُ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَی خَلْفَهُ تِسْعَةَ صُفُوفٍ مِنَ الْمَلائِکَةِ، فِی کُلِّ صَفٍّ مَا لا یُحْصِی عَدَدَهُمْ إلاَّ اللهُ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَی، أَحَدُ طَرَفَیْ کُلِّ صَفٍّ بِالْمَشْرِقِ وَالآخَرُ بِالْمَغْرِبِ. فَإِذَا فَرَغَ کَتَبَ لَهُ بِعَدَدِهِمْ دَرَجَاتٍ.

It is reported in al-Majalis on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that the Prophet (S) sad in a hadith: “When God

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Thawab al-’a’mal, p.۶۳, hadith ۴۱; Man la yahduruhu al-faqih, I, ۴۷۱.

Almighty appoints the night vigil as sustenance for His slave, man or woman, when he/she wakes up at night with sincere devotion towards God, performs a full ablution, and says prayer for the Almighty God with the purity of intention, with whole heartedness and with tearful eyes, God Almighty appoints seven rows of angels (to pray) behind him/her. No one except God can count their number on each side of each row, which extends from the east to the west. When he concludes the prayer, God (Almighty writes grades for him equal to their number."(1

وَعَنِ العِلَلِ (عِلَلِ الشَّرَائِعِ)، بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَقُولُ: الرَّكْعَتَانِ فِی جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا.

In 'Ilal al-shara'i, it is reported from Anas that he heard the Messenger of God say: "Two rak'ah of prayer performed in the middle of night are dearer to me than the (entire world and everything therein."(2

In a number of ahadith it has been reported that the midnight prayer is the mu'min's honor and dignity, and his adornment in the Hereafter, in the same way as children .and wealth are the adornments of this world

وَعَنِ العِلَلِ (عِلَلِ الشَّرَائِعِ)، بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِاللهِ الأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَقُولُ: مَا أتَّخَذَ اللهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلاً إلا لإِطْعَامِهِ الطَّعَامَ وَصَلاتِهِ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ.

In 'Ilal al-shara'i, Jabir is reported to have heard the Prophet (S) say: "God did not befriend Ibrahim (A) except for his feeding people and offering prayers

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, V, ٢٧٥ -١

.Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Ilal al-shara'i, p.١٣٨ -٢

(by night while the people were fast asleep."(۱)

Had there been no other merit besides this for the midnight prayer, it would have been enough – but for those alone who deserve to practice it, not the likes of me. We do not know what honor and distinction it is and what it means to possess the station of being befriended by God. All intellects fail to comprehend it. If all the adornments of Paradise were displayed before his eyes, such a man would not even glance at them. You also, had you a beloved dear to your heart, or a very dear friend, were he to be present in front of you, it will cause you to neglect all the good and delicious things, absorbing your attention entirely with the vision of the beloved and the radiance of the countenance of the dear one, though this similitude is out of proportion for .describing this condition, to the extent that the east is far from the west

وَعَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِيمَ بِإِسْنَادِهِ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَا مِنْ عَمَلٍ حَسَنٍ يَعْمَلُهُ العَبْدُ إلا وَلَهُ ثَوَابٌ فِى القُرْآنِ إلا صَلاةَ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ لَمْ يُبَيِّنْ ثَوَابَهَا لِعَظِيمَ خَطَرِهَا عَنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ: (تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنْ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ. فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِىَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّهِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.)

From 'Ali ibn Ibrahim who, with his chain of narrators, reports from Imam al-Sadiq (A) ,that he said, "For every good deed that a slave of God performs

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.Ibid., p.۲۳; Wasa'il al Shi'ah, V, ۲۷۶ -۱

the reward for it is specified in the Quran, except for the midnight prayer, which commands an unusually high reward on account of its great worth. (God says in the Quran): Their sides shun their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and hope; and they expend of what We have provided them. No soul knows what delight is laid up for them secretly, as a recompense for that they were doing (۳۲:۱۶,۱۷)."(۱)

What can be the delight that God Almighty has kept in store for them, concealing it from the eyes of all? Had it been something similar to the flowing streams, the magnificent mansions, and the diverse bounties of Paradise, He would have described it - as in the case of other deeds, of which (at least) the angels are aware. This shows that this reward is above all these and of a different kind; its greatness stands beyond that which can be communicated to anyone, especially the inhabitants of this lowly world. Do not liken the bounties of this world to those of the other.

Do not imagine that the Paradise and the gardens therein are similar to the gardens of this world, only somewhat vaster and of a greater degree of grandeur. There is the abode of Divine beneficence and the house of the hospitality of the Lord. The entire world is not comparable in grandeur to a single hair of a houri of Paradise. Rather it is not comparable even to a thread of

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۱- Ilal al-shara'i, p.۲۳; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, V, ۲۷۶.

.the garments made for its inhabitants

Despite all this, God Almighty has named none of these as reward for the performers of the midnight prayer, and has only referred to the high station of theirs in the words of the above verse. But, alas, we are indolent, being not men of certitude. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for us to be neglectful to such a degree and to be so drowned in deep sleep till morning. If the night vigils were to make man aware of the mysteries of salat, were he to preoccupy his mind with the remembrance and contemplation of the Lord, and were his nights to become mounts of ascent into the Divine Proximity, his reward would be nothing other than the vision of the Absolute .Beauty

And woe to us, the negligent who do not wake up from slumber till the end of life and remain under the intoxication of nature! Woe to us, whom every day increases in stupefaction! Woe to us, who live on the animal plane, comprehending nothing but eating, drinking and lovemaking! Whatever we do, even if it is worship, that too is merely meant for catering to the needs of the belly and the underneath. Do you imagine that the salat of Khalil al-Rahman, the Friend of the Beneficent (Ibrahim), was similar to that of ours? He did not speak of his wishes even to Jibra'il - and we? We do not hesitate to beg even Satan (if we believe

!him to be mighty enough to grant our prayers) to fulfill our desires

Yet there is no need to lose hope. It is possible that after a period of performing the night vigil and habituating ourselves to it God Almighty may gradually help you and cover you, with an invisible gesture of grace, with the robe of His mercy. But, on the whole, do not be oblivious of the mysteries of worship, and do not devote yourself merely to the outward refinements of Quranic recitings. If you cannot perform it with a sincerity of intention, strive at least for the delight that God Almighty has kept hidden from all the sights. And remember in your prayers, should it be your wish, this rebellious and beastly sinner who has forgone all higher stations to remain content to thrive on the animal plane. And chant with full attention and sincerity of intention this :prayer

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِی التَّجافِی عَنْ دَارِ الغُرُورِ والإِنَابَهَ إِلَی دَارِ الخُلُودِ والإِسْتِعْدَادِ لِلْمَوْتِ قَبْلَ حُلُولِ الفَوْتِ.

My God, I implore Thee to rescue me from the house of illusion and this abode of delirium, and help me to return to the abode of eternity. Grant me the ability and (preparedness to die before such an opportunity is lost.(۱

?What Is Taqwa

This should be known that taqwa (derived from wiqayah, defense) is a kind of defense and shielding. In common speech, as well as in the vocabulary of traditions, it means to restrain or bridle oneself from violating Divine commands (awamir and nawahi) and from going

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۱- Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al jinan.

against what is pleasing to God. It is usually used for efficacious guarding of the soul and total control of it from falling into illegal and illegitimate acts, by refraining from all :(that is suspect (i.e. not known to be permissible for certain

وَمَنْ أَخَذَ بِالشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِى المُحَرَّمَاتِ وَهَلَكَ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُ. وَمَنْ رَتَعَ حَوْلَ الحِمَى يُوشَكُ أَنْ يَقَعَ فِيهِ.

Whosoever pursues dubious things, falls into forbidden things (muharramat) and is destroyed on account of his ignorance, such as an animal that grazes around a mire is (liable to soon get entrapped in it.(١)

This should be known that although mere taqwa does not by itself constitute the higher stages of perfection and spiritual accomplishment, but reaching a high station is also not possible without it; for as long as the soul is smeared with commission of prohibited deeds, one cannot enter the door of humanity and cannot be a wayfarer of its path. As long as man remains obedient to his carnal wishes and sensual pleasures and their sweetness hangs in his mouth, he cannot even reach the preliminary grades of human perfection. As long as he cherishes the love of the world in his heart and has the fondness: for mundane things, he cannot reach the station of even those who are .halfway on the road (mutawassitun) and the zuhhad

And as long as self-love lies embedded in his essence, he will not reach the station of the sincere (mukhlisun) and the lovers of God. Until the love for

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah -١

the pluralities of the world (mulk) and the Hereafter (malakut) is evident in his heart, he will not reach the high station of the majdhubun (those immersed in the Divine and detached from all worldly attachments). And until the plurality of the Names is manifest within the core of his essence, he cannot attain total annihilation (fana). As long as his heart is turned towards the spiritual station, he has not attained the station of complete extinction. And until his essence is prone to take up different colors (talwin), he has not reached the station of stable endurance, and the Essence; as the referent of the Name of the Essence, will not cast Its eternal and everlasting radiance .into his heart

Thus, for ordinary men taqwa is with respect to the forbidden things; for the elect it is vis-a-vis sensual pleasures; for the ascetics it is in relation to the world, for the sincere it is in relation to the love of the self; and for the majdhubun it is in relation to the plurality of Act; for the faniyun (those who have annihilated themselves in the Essence) it is in relation to the plurality of the Names; for, the wasdun (those who have reached the Essence) taqwa is in relation to absorption in the annihilation; and for the mutamakkinun it is in regard to inner instabilities (talwinat), and hence the :Quran enjoins

(فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ.)

(So be as steadfast as thou art commanded. (۱۱: ۱۱۲

There is much that can be said

p: ۳۸۳

for each one of these stations, the description of which would not lead the likes of us anywhere except into confusion and bafflement over terms, blind as we are to the meanings concealed by the veils of concepts, and there are a people who befit every field. Now we shall turn our attention to taqwa in its elementary form, which is more .significant for mankind

Taqwa For The Common People

Remember, my dear, that in the same way as there is health and sickness for the human body and remedies and cures for correcting it, there is also health and disease and remedies and cures for the human soul as well. Its health and well-being is observance of moderation, it lies in treading the human path, and sickness and .affliction is the result of deviating from the right path of humanity

The spiritual maladies and diseases are a thousand times more significant than the physical maladies; for at the most the latter ultimately lead to death. As soon as death approaches and the soul leaves the body, all physical maladies and corporeal defects and infirmities disappear for one, and one does not feel any bodily pain and affliction .any more

But if, God forbid, one is afflicted with spiritual maladies and diseases of the soul, the time of death is withdrawal of the soul's attention from the body and its redirection towards the domain of the spirit: that is the beginning of the experience of these sicknesses and afflictions. The similitude of attention toward the world and

its attachments is like the narcotics which makes its addict oblivious of himself. The breaking of the soul's bonds with the realm of the physical world makes the soul gain .self-consciousness

As soon as it becomes self-conscious, all the pains, diseases and indispositions that lie latent within the depths of the essence, now overwhelm it and each and every thing that remained invisible until that time, like fire smouldering under ashes, becomes evident. Those diseases and maladies either cannot be driven away and adhere firmly to one, or if they are remediable, it is only after being subjected to tortures, pains, fire :and burning for thousands of years that they can be wiped away

آخِرُ الدَّوَاءِ الكَيُّ.

.The last cure is cauterization

:God Almighty says

(يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِی نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ.)

It will be heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs (will be branded therewith. (۹:۳۵

The apostles of God are similar to kind physicians who out of great concern for treating illnesses prescribe different remedies in accordance with the severity of the disease. They have strived to guide mankind on the right path of genuine guidance (We are God-trained physicians). The effect of the spiritual deeds and actions of the heart, as well as the external deeds and actions of the body, is similar to that of a medicine. In the same way, the effect of taqwa, on each of its levels, is similar to abstaining from those things that aggravate

.the disease

Unless the sick man does not abstain from harmful things, it is not possible that his malady be replaced by well-being and the prescribed remedy be effectual. During physical illness, sometimes, despite a little intemperance, medicine and nature do their work and one may regain his health and well-being; for nature itself is a protector of health and medicine acts as its assistant. But the matter is more serious in the case of spiritual maladies, as here the nature dominates the spirit from the very beginning. and the spiritual side heads towards corruption and decline:

(إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ.)

(Verily, it is the self which incites to evil (۱۲:۵۳)

Accordingly, the disease overwhelms it on the slightest indulgence and intemperance, making inroads and destroying its health and vigor completely. Therefore, anyone who is concerned with his spiritual soundness, will try to improve his condition after finding the ways of getting rid of painful chastisement. His well-being rests upon two things: one is to adopt those things which bring spiritual health, and the other is to abstain from things which bring spiritual harm and affliction.

It should be remembered that the spiritual harm inflicted by the forbidden things is greater than all other vices, and it is for this very reason that they have been forbidden. And to perform the obligatory and incumbent duties is also most necessary, and it is for this reason that they have been made obligatory and given priority over all other things. These have been considered as the

.foremost and the most essential steps in the direction of spiritual advancement

Treading the path of felicity and reaching the highest human grades and stations depends upon having traversed these two stages. Anyone who observes them acquires felicity and salvation. Of these two, taqwa, or abstinence from muharramat, is the more significant. The mystics and the wayfarers have also considered it more significant than the other step. A study of the traditions (of the Prophet [S] and the Imams [A]) and the sermons of the Nahj al-balaghah further confirms this that the .Infallible Ones (A) also laid great emphasis on this step

Therefore, O dear, consider the first stage to be of utmost importance and be greatly heedful and attentive regarding these matters. If the first step is taken rightly and this foundation is laid solidly, there is hope of reaching the other stations; otherwise it is impossible to attain the higher stations and very difficult and painstaking to obtain salvation. Our precious Shaykh used to enjoin us to attend constantly to the following :verses of the Surat al-Hashr

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ. وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ الْفَاسِقُونَ. لَا يَسْتَوِى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّهِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّهِ هُمْ الْفَائِزُونَ. لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِنْ خَشْيَهِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِى لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَهِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَانُ الرَّحِيمُ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِى لَا إِلَهَ

إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.)

O ye who believe! Observe your duty (taqwa) to God. And let every soul look to that which it sendeth on before for the morrow. And observe your duty (taqwa) to God! Verily, God is informed of what ye do. And be not ye as those who forgot God, and He caused them to forget their souls. Such are the evildoers. Not equal are the people of the Fire and the people of the Garden. The people of the Garden, they are the victorious. If We had caused the Quran to descent upon the mountain, thou (O Muhammad) verily hadest seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of God. Such similitudes coin We for mankind that haply they may reflect. He is God, than Whom there is no other god, the Knower of the invisible and the visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is God, than Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb. Glorified be God from all that they ascribe as partners (unto Him)! He is God, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Him, and He is the Mighty,

(the Wise. (۵۹:۱۸-۲۴

Our Shaykh would ask us to recite these verses after daily prayers and to contemplate over their meaning, especially in the late hours of night when the heart is relaxed, stating that it is very effective for curing the soul and for holding the mischief of the self and Satan at bay. He would recommend us to be with ablution (wudu') all .the time, for, he would say, it is like a warrior's armor

In any case, beseech and entreat God Almighty with supplications and tears to succor you and assist you during this trial and to help you in acquiring the faculty of taqwa. Remember that in the beginning it will appear to be a little hard, but after strict observance of a few days discomfort will change into comfort and hardship into leisure and tranquility; rather, it will give you a unique spiritual joy, which those who .have tasted value higher than all other enjoyments

God willing, after strict vigilance and total taqwa, you will progress towards the station of taqwa attained by the elect, which is taqwa against sensual pleasures. When you taste the sweetness of spiritual enjoyment, you will gradually turn away from physical pleasures and try to evade them. Traversing the path will become easier for you and you will not attach any value to transitory physical enjoyments; rather, you will abhor .them. The worldly treasures will appear ugly and coarse to your eyes

In this state of consciousness, you will realize that each one of

the worldly pleasures leaves its trace on the soul, a black blot on the heart: it intensifies the love for this world, which itself causes one to cling to this place, and, at the time of the wrenching away of the soul from the body, takes the form of the agony of death and its distresses and squeezes. Mainly, the anguish and agony of death and its severity are the result of these pleasures and these attachments to the corporeal world, as said earlier. As soon as man gains consciousness of this fact, all .the physical pleasures lose their significance in his eyes

He becomes abhorrent towards the world, its treasures and adornments. This itself is another success, whence the wayfarer advances towards the third grade of taqwa. Thereupon, treading the Path of God becomes easier for him and the road to humanness becomes illuminated and spacious. Every step that he takes carries him .further on the way of Truth

His exercises assume sacred validity. He becomes averse to the self, its ways and its demands. He senses within his being the love of God and he is no more satisfied now with the promises of Paradise and the palaces and the houris thereof. He yearns for a higher ideal and end hating his (earlier) self-seeking and self-love. His taqwa is now directed against self love and he becomes muttaqi in regard to his own self-indulgence. This is a high and lofty attainment and the first step in the direction of sensing

the fragrance of wilayah. God Almighty specifies a seat for him under the shelter of .His grace and succors him with His special favors

The matters that the wayfarer on the Divine path experiences after this are beyond the ken of expression. And praise belongs to God, in the beginning and the end, outwardly and inwardly, and may His benedictions be upon Muhammad and the pure .of his progeny

(Thirteenth Hadith: Trust In God (Tawakkul

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الجَلِيلِ ثِقَهِ الإِسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحابِنَا، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ غَيْرِ وَاحِدٍ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَسْبَاطٍ، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ عُمَرَ الحَلالِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِى الحَسَنِ الأَوَّلِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ.) فَقَالَ: التَّوَكُّلُ عَلَى اللهِ دَرَجَاتٌ؛ مِنْهَا أَنْ تَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللهِ فِى أُمُورِكَ كُلِّهَا، فَمَا فَعَلَ بِكَ كُنْتَ عَنْهُ رَاضِياً، تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لا يَأْلُوكَ خَيْراً وَفَضْلاً وَتَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الحُكْمَ فِى ذَلِكَ لَهُ، فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ بِتَفْوِيضِ ذَلِكَ إِلَيْهِ وَثِقْ بِهِ فِيهَا وَفِى غَيْرِهَا.

Muhammad ibn Ya’qub (al-Kulayni): from a group of our teachers, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from more than one transmitter, from ‘Ali ibn Asbat, from Ahmad ibn ‘Umar al-Hallal, from ‘Ali ibn Suwayd, from Abu al-Hasan al-’Awwal (A). ‘Ali ibn Suwayd says, ‘I asked him concerning the utterance of God Almighty: And whoever puts his trust in God, then God suffices him (۶۵:۳).’ The Imam (A) said: “There are various degrees of trust in God. Of them one is that you should put your

trust in God in all your affairs, being well-pleased with whatever God does to you, knowing for certain that he does not cease in His goodness and grace towards you, and that the command therein rests with Him. So put your trust in God, leaving that to (Him and relying upon Him in regard to that and everything other than that."(۱)

Exposition

Halal, with a shaddah on the lam, means the seller of hill, oil. Abu al-Hasan al-'Awwal is Imam al-Kazim (A), and it is he who is meant (in traditions) when just 'Abu al-Hasan' is mentioned. Abu al-Hasan al-Thani is Imam al-Rida (A) and Abu al-Hasan al-Thalith is Imam al-Hadi (the Tenth Imam). Tawakkul literally mean, admission of one's .inability and reliance on one other than oneself

means, as the lexicographers 'I relied upon him in a certain matter, (إِتَّكَلْتُ عَلَى فُلانٍ فِى أَمْرٍ) .which means considering someone sufficient ,(إِوْتَكَلْتُ) originally being(إِتَّكَلْتُ) the word

meaning 'to fail', 'to neglect', 'to refrain'. In the (ألـواً) and (ألاـ) derived from (يَأْلُوكَ) transitive form, some have said, when it requires two maf'ul, the sense of preventing .... and depriving (man') is assured

Tawakkul, is something other than tafwid; and the two are different from rida and wuthuq, as will be explained later on. We will now explain this noble tradition in a :number of sections

Tawakkul And Its Degrees

Know, that closely related meanings have been ascribed to tawakkul by the various definitions proposed by different schools, each according to its own approach. The :author of Manazil al-sai'rin says

التَّوَكُّلُ كِلَهُ الأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ

.Usul al-Kafi (Akhundi), ii, ۳۹۱, hadith ۳ -۱

إلَی مَالِکِهِ وَالتَّعْوِیلُ عَلَی وَکَالَتِهِ.

Tawakkul means entrusting all the matters to their Master and relying upon His (trusteeship.(١

:Some urafa have said

التَّوَکُّلُ طَرْحُ البَدَنِ فِی العُبُودِیَّهِ وَتَعَلُّقُ القَلْبِ بِالرُّبُوبِیَّهِ.

Tawakkul means throwing the body down (as in prostration) in servitude (to God) and .attaching the heart to (His) Lordship

That is, it means using one's bodily powers in obedience to God and refraining from interfering in the matters (of the heart) and consigning it to the Lord. Some others :have said

التَّوَکُّلُ عَلَی اللهِ انْقِطَاعُ العَبْدِ فِی جَمِیعِ مَا یَأْمُلُهُ مِنَ المَخْلُوقِینَ.

Tawakkul upon God means the severance by the servant of all hopes and .(expectations from the creatures (and attaching, them to God

The meanings mentioned are. closely related arid there is no need to delve further on the meaning of the word. However, that which should be mentioned is that tawakkul has various degrees in accordance with the stations of the devotees. Since the knowledge of these degrees of tawakkul depends on the knowledge of the various degrees of the devotee's knowledge of their Lord, the Almighty and the Glorious, we .cannot avoid discussing them here

Let it be known to you that one of the esoteric principles of the wayfarers of the Path, without which no progress is possible, is the knowledge of God's Lordship and Mastership and the quality of the sway of the Holy Essence over all affairs. We shall not discuss the theoretical aspect of this issue, for it calls for an examination of ,questions related to free will and predestination

١– Khwajah ‘Abd Allah al–’Ansari, Manazil al–sa’irin.

which is not suitable for these pages. Here, we will only mention the different degrees .of the people's knowledge of it

People are very different in regard to the knowledge of the Lordship of the Sacred Essence .of God. The commoners among the monotheists consider God Almighty the Creator of the general essences of things and their elements and substances; but they do not believe in the all-embracing Lordship of God, and consider His authority over things as limited. As a matter of verbal habit they may often declare that God decrees all matters and has power over all things, that nothing can come into existence without His sacred Will. Yet, their actual station is not at a par with their verbal profession, neither in respect of knowledge, nor faith, neither experience nor .conviction

This class of people, to which we also belong, have no knowledge of God's Lordship; their faith in tawhid is deficient and the sovereignty of the Lord is concealed from their sight by the veils of apparent causation. Hence they do not occupy the station of tawakkul, which is our concern here, except on the level of mere verbal claim. Accordingly, they do not rely in their worldly affairs on anything except the superficial .causes and material factors

If sometimes they turn their attention to God and beseech something of Him, that is either on account of imitation or for reasons of caution; since not only they see no harm in it but allow a possibility of

benefit. Thus there is a scent of tawakkul in them, although whenever they deem the .apparent causal factors as favorable they totally forget God and His efficacy

Now that which is staid regarding tawakkul, that it is not opposed to action and effort is quite right and in accordance with reason as well as revelation. But to fail to see God's Lordship and His efficacy and to consider material causes as independent is contrary to tawakkul. Although this kind of people is devoid of tawakkul in respect to their worldly affairs, they make vigorous claims of tawakkul when it comes to the matters of the Hereafter. They justify their sluggishness and neglect in the matters of acquisition of transcendental knowledge, spiritual development and fulfillment of moral and devotional duties by easy professions of reliance on God and tawakkul on .His beneficence

With such verbal declarations as 'God is great' and 'My trust lies in God's beneficence' they hope to attain the stations of the Hereafter. However, in regard to worldly matters, they declare, "Effort and endeavor are not contrary to tawakkul on God and reliance upon His munificence." This is nothing except one of the guiles of the carnal self and the Devil. For this sort has tawakkul on God neither in the matters of the world nor in the affairs of the Hereafter. But since they consider worldly matters as paramount, they put their reliance on material causes, not relying on God and His .efficacy

On the other hand, since

the affairs of the Hereafter are not important in their eyes and as they have no real faith in the Day of Resurrection and its details, they conjure up pretexts to conceal their neglect. Hence they say, 'God is great', and they declare trust in God and faith in the intercession of the Intercessors, although such professions are nothing but empty .verbiage and meaningless oscillations of the tongue

There is another class of people, who, having been convinced either by reason or revelation, affirm that God Almighty is the sole determiner of matters, the cause of all causes, efficacious in the realm of being, there being no limit to His power and influence. On the level of rational belief, they have tawakkul in God; that is the complete grounds of tawakkul have been furnished for them by reason and .revelation

Hence they consider themselves as mutawakkil and are able to supply rational proofs in justification of tawakkul, having confirmed rational conviction in all the essential preliminaries of tawakkul, which are: God's knowledge of the needs of His creatures; His power and ability to satisfy those needs; His freedom from stinginess; and His Love and mercy for His creatures. On the basis of these, it is necessary to have trust on the Omniscient, Powerful, unniggardly and Merciful Lord, Who takes care to provide whatever is good for His creatures and in their interest, Who does not allow them to remain deprived of what is good for them, even though they themselves should

.be incapable of distinguishing between that which is beneficial or harmful for them

This group, although they are mutawakkil on the level of rational knowledge, has not yet attained the stage of faith; they are shaky when confronted with the matters of life. There is a conflict between their reason and their heart, in which reason is dominated by the heart which has faith in material causes and is blind to God's power .and efficacy

There is a third group in which the conviction in God's sway over creation has penetrated into the heart, which has firm faith in God's Sovereignty and Mastership over things. The pen of reason has inscribed all the essentials of tawakkul on the .tablet of their heart. It is they who possess the station of tawakkul

But the members of this group also differ from one another in regard to the level and degree of faith, whose highest degree is contentment (itminan) at which the most perfect degree of tawakkul appears in their heart. Then, their heart is detached from causation and attached to the Lordship of God, on Whom they rely and in Whom they-are content, in accordance with the words of the mystic who defined tawakkul as ".“casting the body away in servitude to God and attaching the heart to His Lordship

That which was mentioned above holds true in the case when the heart still dwells in the stage of plurality (kathrat al-af'ar) otherwise it leaves behind the station of tawakkul to attain to a

.higher station whose discussion lies outside the scope of this exposition

Thus, it was seen that tawakkul has various stages and degrees, and perhaps the degree of tawakkul referred to in the hadith is the one pertaining to the second group, for it mentions knowledge as its preliminary condition. Or perhaps it refers to a degree of tawakkul according to some other mode of gradation, for tawakkul is amenable to another kind of gradation, as described in relation with the various stages of wayfaring by the experts of mystics knowledge and spiritual discipline, as a gradual gradation from plurality to unity; for absolute extinction (fana' al-mutlaq al-af'ali) is not attained instantaneously but gradually. In the first stage, the wayfarer .observes unity in his own self and then in all other beings

The stations of tawakkul, rida, taslim and all the other stations are attainable gradually. The wayfarer may at first exercise tawakkul in some of his affairs and with respect to hidden and unobservable causes. Then, gradually, his tawakkul becomes general, in that it extends from hidden and inner causes to manifest and observable ones and from his own affairs to that of his relatives and associates. Accordingly, it is stated in the holy tradition that one of the degrees of tawakkul is trust in God in all .one's affairs

Difference Between Tawakkul And Rida

Let it be known to you that the station of rida is different from the station of tawakkul, being higher and more luminous. This is because whereas the mutawakkil seeks his own

good and benefit and entrust his affairs to God considering Him the provider of good, the radi (one who has attained the station of rida) is one who has annihilated his will in the Divine Will, having no more a separate will of his own. When a mystic was asked, “Matur’id?” (What is your wish?), he replied, “Urid an la urid” (My wish is not to wish at .all). What he meant is the station of rida

As to the words of the Imam (A) in the hadith, “that you should be well-pleased (radiyan) with whatever God does to you,” they do not refer to the station of rida. Hence, he (A) says thereafter, “Know for certain that whatever He does to you, your good and benefit lies therein.” It appears that the Imams (A) intended to bring about the station of tawakkul in the listener. For this he mentions certain preliminaries. First, ”.he (A) says, “Know that He does not cease to be good and benign towards you

Then he (A) says, “Know that the authority therein lies with Him.” Of course, one who knows that God Almighty has power over everything and that He does not cease to be graceful and benign, he would attain to the station of tawakkul, because the two main pillars of tawakkul are the same as stated by the Imam (A); although he (A) does not explicitly state the other two or three pillars. After mentioning the explicit and implicit preliminaries - that whatever

God Almighty does is welcome because in it lies one's good and benefit – the preliminaries which guide to the station of tawakkul, he (A) draws the conclusion and ".says, "Then have tawakkul on God

Tafwid, Tawakkul And Thiqah

Know that tafwid is also different from tawakkul, and so also thiqah is different from these two. Hence each of the three has been considered a different station on the (wayfarer's path. The Khwajah says:(١)

التَّفْوِيضُ أَلْطَفُ إِشَارَةً وَأَوْسَعُ مَعْنىً مِنَ التَّوَكُّلِ. التَّوَكُّلُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنْهُ.

That is, tafwid is subtler and more refined than tawakkul, for tawfid, means that the devotee should see no power and capacity in himself and that he should consider himself ineffectual and regard God as All-effectual. This is not so in tawakkul, for the mutawakkil makes God his own substitute, one in charge of his affairs, for attaining that which is good and beneficial. Tafwid is wider and tawakkul is a branch of it, because tawakkul is in regard to one's interests and tafwid is in regard to absolutely .all the affairs

Moreover, tawakkul does not occur except after the presence of its cause, that is the matter in regard to which the devotee comes to rely upon God. An example of it is the tawakkul of the Apostle (S) and his Companions in regard to security from the evil of :the idolaters, at the time when they were told

(الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.)

Those unto whom men said, 'Lo! the people have

.Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari, Manazil al-sa'irin -١

gathered against you, therefore fear them'. But it increased them in faith and they (said, 'God is sufficient for us and an excellent trustee is He' (٣:١٧٣

Tafwid, however, is mostly antecedent to its referent cause, as indicated by the :(supplication narrated from the Apostle of God (S

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّی أَسْلَمْتُ نَفْسِی إِلَیْکَ وأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِی إِلَیْکَ وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِی إِلَیْکَ.

My God, I surrender my self to Thee; I seek refuge with Thee, and I hand over my .matter to Thee

At times tafwid is subsequent to the occurrence of its cause, such as in the case of the (tafwid of the believer belonging to the Pharaoh's people. (۴٠:۴۴

The account given above is a condensed translation of the exposition by the famous 'arif 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani of the words of the perfect 'arif Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, and that which the Khwajah says is also substantially the same. However, I have reservations about considering tawakkul to be a branch of tafwid, and there is an obvious lack of rigor in regarding tafwid as being the more general of the two. Also, there is no reason to regard tawakkul as being subsequent to the cause, for tawakkul .can be both antecedent as well as subsequent

,As to the words of the holy tradition

فَتَوَکَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ بِتَفْوِیضِ ذَلِکَ إِلَیْهِ.

Possibly, since tawakkul is accompanied by viewing oneself as being in charge of one's affairs - because in tawakkul one makes God one's wakil in an affair that he deems as pertaining to himself - the Imam (A) wished

to lift the questioner from the station of tawakkul to that of tafwid, making him understand that God Almighty is not your substitute and deputy in regard to the charge of your affairs; rather, He is the master of His own realm and the Lord of His own kingdom (to which you and your affairs belong). In Manazil al-sai'rin, the .Khwajah has also pointed out this while discussing the third degree of tawakkul

And as to thiqah (reliance), it is different from tawakkul and tafwid, as the Khwajah :says

الثِّقَهُ سَوَادُ عَيْنِ التَّوَكلِّ وَنُقْطَهُ دَائِرَهِ التَّفْوِيضِ وَسُوَيْدَاءُ قَلْبِ التَّسْلِيمِ.

Thiqah is the eye of tawakkul, the (moving) point of the circle of tafwid, and the inmost (heart of taslim (surrender).(۱

That is, the three stations cannot be attained without thiqah. Rather thiqah on God Almighty is the soul of those stations, and the devotee cannot attain them without thiqah. This allows us to understand the Imam's allusion to it, after the mention of :tawakkul and tafwid, when he says

ثِقْ فِيهَا وَفِى غَيْرِهَا.

Fourteenth Hadith: Fear of God

point

بِسَنَدى المُتَّصِلِ إِلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ ثِقَهِ الإسْلام وَعِمَادِ المُسْلِمِينَ، عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ حَدِيدٍ، عَنْ مَنْصُورِ بْنِ يُونُسَ، عَنِ الحَارِثِ بْنِ المُغِيرَه أَوْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لَهُ: مَا كَانَ فِى وَصِيَّهِ لُقْمَانَ؟ قَالَ: كَانَ فِيهَا الأعَاجِيبُ. وَكَانَ أَعْجَبَ ما كَانَ فِيهَا أَنْ قَالَ لإبْنِهِ: خَفِ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خِيفَهً لَوْ جِئْتَهُ بِبِرِّ الثَّقَلَيْنِ لَعَذَّبَكَ. وَارْجُ اللهَ رَجَاءً لَوْ جِئْتَهُ بِذُنُوبِ الثَّقَلَيْنِ لَرَحِمَكَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ:

۱- Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari, Manazil al-sa'irin.

كَانَ أَبِی يَقُولُ: إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُؤْمِنٍ إلا [و] فِی قَلْبِهِ نُورَانِ: نُورُ خِيفَهٍ وَنُورُ رَجَاءٍ، لَوْ وُزِنَ هَذَا لَمْ يَزِدْ عَلَى هَذَا وَلَوْ وُزِنَ هَذَا لَمْ يَزِدْ عَلَى هَذَا.

Thiqat al-Islam wa 'Imad al-Muslimin Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni): From a number of our companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from 'Ali ibn Hadid, from Mansur ibn Yunus, from al-Harith ibn al-Mughirah or his father, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) (Imam al-Sadiq). Al-Harith, or his father, says, "I asked him (A), 'What was (mentioned) in the testament of Luqman?' 'There were marvelous things in it', he said, 'and the most wonderful of that which he said to his son was this: "Have such a fear of God Almighty that were you to come to Him with the virtues of the two worlds (thaqalan) He would still chastise you, and put such a hope in God that were you to come to Him with the sins of the two worlds He would still have compassion for you." Then Abu 'Abd Allah (A) added: 'My father used to say, "There is no believer who does not have two lights in his heart: the light of fear and the light of hope. Were one of these to be measured it would not exceed the other, and were the other one to be (measured, it would not exceed this one."(١)

Exposition

According to al-Jawhari in his al-Sihah, a'ajib is the plural of u'jubah, in the same way as ahadith is the plural of uhduthah. Some lexicographers state

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١- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, ed. 'Ali Akbar al-Ghifari, ۴th edition, Dar Mus'ab Dar al-Ta'aruf, Beirut, ١۴٠١ H., II, ۶٧, hadith ١.

that u'jubah is something amazing, either on account of its beauty or its ugliness, and the former (i.e. beauty) is meant in this tradition. It appears that the word primarily has the specific sense of something of striking beauty, and is used in a wider sense, means so and so is فُلانٌ يَبَرُّ خَالِقَهُ .parasitically, Birr is the opposite of 'uquq, disobedience obedient to his Creator, as pointed out by al-Jawhari. 'Thaqalan' means mankind and .the Jinn

This noble hadith means that the fear of God and hope in Him should be at the highest degree. Despairing of Divine mercy and considering oneself secure from God's devising (makr) are totally prohibited, as indicated by a great number of traditions and explicitly stated by the Noble Qur'an. Secondly, none of these should exceed the other. God willing, we shall elaborate upon this and other aspects of the holy tradition .in the course of a few sections

Between Hope And Fear

Let it be known to you that the man cognizant of the realities and the relationship between possible existents (mumkin al-wujud) and the Necessary Being (wajib al-wujud), exalted and sublime is He, holds a two-sided viewpoint: The first thing he has in view is the essential defectiveness of his own, of all possible beings, and the .wretchedness of the entire universe

Through direct experience or through indirect knowledge he discovers that the entire existence of a possible being is immersed in lowliness and want, drowned in the dark ocean of possibility, poverty and need, always and for

ever. The possible existents have nothing of their own: they are utterly insignificant, thoroughly devoid of majesty, and absolutely defective. Rather, none of these expressions can adequately express their utter neediness, and we use them for lack of proper words. Otherwise, defectiveness, poverty and need are a part of the quality of thingness. None of the possible beings and none of tile creatures has anything that .is its own

Accordingly, even if a man were to accomplish all the worships, follow all the Divine teachings and obey the Holy Lord most perfectly and meticulously, he has nothing but shame, humiliation and fear to his share. What obedience can lie offer? what worship? from whom? and to whom? Are not all the attributes of excellence His own, without the possible having any share whatsoever therein? Rather when the possible being approaches the threshold of these excellences, in order to praise God Almighty, it throws the shadow of its defectiveness on His praise and soils the purity and infinitude of His holy Names. It is regarding this station (of finitude and possibility vis-:a-vis the infinitude of the Necessary Being) that He declares

(مَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ حَسَنَهٍ فَمِنْ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَیِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

(Whatever good visits thee, it is from God; whatever evil visits thee is of thyself. (۴:۷۹

And it is regarding the first station (of the absolute neediness of the possible existent) :that He declares

(قُلْ کُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.)

(Say (O Muhammad): Everything is from God. (۴:۷۸

And it is about. these stations that

:the poet (Hafiz) says

پیر گفت خطا بر قلم صنع نرفت آفرین بر نظر پاک خطا پوشش باد

.'Our master said, 'The pen of creation did not make any error

!Praised be the immaculate eye that conceals all defects

The statement of the mystic master (pir) relates to the second station, and the statement of the speaker himself relates to the first one. Hence, this view fills mall .with dread, grief, shame and humiliation

In the other view, he beholds the Perfection of the Necessary Being, the expanse of His mercy, compassion and love. Therein, he sees the unlimited vastness of His various bounties and favors whose number is beyond limit and number and which are .(bestowed without any prior capacity or deservedness (on the recipient's part

He has opened the doors of favor and bounty on His creatures without any deservedness. The initiative lies with His bounteousness, which precedes request and demand. The Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin Zayn al-Abidin (A) in the prayers of al-Sahifat al-Kamilah and his other prayers has recurrently pointed out this matter.

This view gives strength to his hope, making him hopeful of Divine mercy. He sees his magnanimous Lord Whose bequests are purely due to His care and compassion, the Lord of all kings Who bestows without asking and prior to the receiver's capacity. All the intellects fall short in knowing even an iota of His nobility. The disobedience of the sinners cots not cause any disturbance iii the order of Isis vast dominion, and the obedience of the obedient does

.not add anything to it

Rather, the guidance of the Holiest Essence to the paths of obedience, anti. His prohibition of disobedience, ate for the sake of the creatures, in order that they may attain to His beneficence, His vast mercy and bounty, that they may attain the stations of perfection and higher degrees of freedom from defect, deformity and ugliness. Hence, should it be that when tomorrow when we enter the court of the Almighty and stand in the presence of His compassion and mercy, we should be able to say: “O God, Who clothed us with the robes of existence and provided us all the means of our life and comfort, over and above the perception of perceivers, Who showed to us all the paths of guidance – all these of Your favors were for our own .good and in order to benefit us further from the vast store of Your love and bounty

Now that we stand in Your glorious and magnanimous presence, we have come with the sins of the two worlds. Yet the sins of the sinners have not created any defect in the order of Your dominion, nor diminished the infinitude of Your mercy. What will You have for this handful of dust, that has no significance in front of Your greatness, except pity and compassion? Can anything except pity and compassion be hoped ”?from You, O Lord

Hence, man should always be moving back and forth between these two views: neither should he ever

close his eyes to his defects and shortcomings in fulfilling the duties of creaturehood, nor should he ever take his eyes off the expansive and all-encompassing mercy, love .and compassion of God Almighty

Stages And Degrees Of Fear

My dear, know that there are various levels and degrees of fear and hope in accordance with the condition of persons and the level of their knowledge (ma'rifah). The fear of the common people is in regard to chastisement. The fear of the elect is in regard to the wrath. The fear of the elect of the elect is from concealment (ihtijab) (i.e. deprivation from beatitude). Here, it is not our purpose to describe these stations and .we will confine our discourse to certain points pertinent to what has been said earlier

You should know that no creature can worship God Almighty as He deserves to be worshipped; for worship means extolling the praise of that Sacred Essence, and the praise offered by every creature is derived from its knowledge of Him, which in reality does not apprehend His Sacred Essence. Thus, it is not possible for them to praise His beauty and grandeur. Hence the Noblest of creatures and the Most knowledgeable of beings about His Lordship (i.e. the Prophet [S]), confesses his inadequacy in this :regard, and declares

مَا عَرِفْنَاکَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِکَ وَلا عَبَدْنَاکَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِکَ.

We did not know You as You deserve to be known. We did not worship You as You (deserve to be worshipped.(١

The second sentence is intended to explain the cause of what is

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.Safinat al-Bihar, II, ۱۸۰ -۱

:stated in the first one. And he (S) said

أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ.

(You are as You have praised Yourself.(١

Therefore, imperfection is essential to possible being and Absolute Sublimity belongs exclusively to the Sacred Essence of the Almighty. And since the creatures are unable to attain to the praise and worship of the Sacred Essence without the knowledge and worship of God, none of them can attain to the degrees of perfection and the stations of the Hereafter (as has been demonstrated in its own place for the knowers of the Hereafter, and in regard to which the common people are oblivious, as they consider the Hereafterly stations as extravagances and the like, and regarding their fancies it ,must be said

وَتَعَالَى اللهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ عُلُوّاً كَبِيراً.

High indeed is He exalted above that (they say)'!), God Almighty, with His expansive' favor and His all-inclusive compassion, opened a door of His mercy upon them, out of His love, of the teachings regarding the hidden and of revelation and inspiration, through His angels and prophets. That is the door of worship ('ibadah) and knowledge .((ma'rifah

He, thus, indicated the paths of worship to His servants and threw open the road of knowledge to them, that they may, as far as is possible, remove their shortcomings and defects and attain to the possible degrees of perfection, that they may be guided by the light of servitude to the world of Divine magnanimity, to the domain of the spirit and the aroma, to the paradise of

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.Safinat al-Bihar, II, ١٨٠ -١

.His bounties, or, rather, to the good pleasure of God, which is greater than all that

Thus, the opening of the gates of worship and service is one of the greatest of bounties, for which the creatures owe their deepest gratitude, although it is a favor for which they can never offer adequate thanks, for each expression of gratitude is itself the key that opens a further door to sublimity. Thus, they are ever incapable of .offering adequate thanks for His bounties

Thus when man attains the knowledge of this fountainhead and his heart becomes familiar with it, he confesses to his own shortcoming, and even if he is able to enter into the court of the Almighty with a record of service and worship equal to that of the worship and service of all mankind, Jinn, and angels near to God, he would still be .fearful and conscious of inadequacy

Also, the knowing servants of God and His elect friends, on whom the sacred doors of Providence have been opened and whose hearts have been illumined by the light of marifah - their hearts are so full of dread and trembling that even if all tree excellences were accessible to them, and were all the keys to the treasures of Divine knowledge be given them, and should their hearts be filled with Divine irradiation, that would not reduce their fear by an atom's weight nor diminish the trembling of their quaking hearts. Hence- one of them says. 'All are afraid of

the End, and I am dreadful of the beginning.’

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَلا حَوْلَ وَلا قُوَّهَ إلا بِاللهِ.

May glory be to God, and there is no power or might which is not by God! I seek refuge in God Almighty! God knows, these words tear a man’s heart to pieces. They make the heart melt, and take away his wits. But, alas! How negligent is man!

Another thing is that which we mentioned while expounding an earlier tradition, that all our obedience and worship are for the sake of selfish aims and motivated by self-love. In reality, it is abstinence from the world for the sake of the rewards of the Hereafter - which, nevertheless, for free men, is abstinence from the world for worldly rewards.

Hence, were we to come to our Lord with the worship of the two worlds, we would not deserve anything except expulsion from the Divine proximity. This is because, God, the Blessed and the Exalted, has invited us into His sacred proximity and love, declaring:

وَخَلَقْتُکَ لأَجْلِی.

I have created thee for Myself.

He has made the knowledge of Him the end of our creation and shown to us the paths of knowledge and servitude. Despite it, all that we are occupied with is catering to our belly and our carnal lusts, with no purpose in view except self-seeking and self-love!

Then, O wretched man, whose worship and devotion do not entitle thee to anything except expulsion and remoteness from His sanctified proximity and to His wrath and chastisement! What

have thee to rely upon? Why, shouldn’t the fear of God’s Might unsettle you and make your heart bleed? Do you, have anything to rely upon? Do you rely upon your works and trust your deeds? If that be so, woe to you and your estimation of yourself! And woe to you for your estimation of the Master of all masters! However, should your reliance and trust be upon the bounty of your Lord, His expansive compassion and the all-inclusive love of the Sacred Essence, your reliance is indeed well placed; you have relied upon a truly reliable thing, and have sought a firm refuge.

Hope And Prayer

O God! O Lord! Our hands are empty, and we know that we are imperfect and insignificant. We have nothing that is worthy of Thy sacred court. We are faulty, head to foot, and full of defects. Our inward and outward being is soaked in mortal sins, deserving eternal damnation. What are we that we should be worthy of praising Thee, when Thy friends (awliya’) declare:

أَفَبِلِسَانِی هَذَا الکَالِّ أَشْکُرُکَ.

How shall I thank Thee with this dumb tongue of mine?

And confess to their incapacity, weakness and shortcoming? What can we, blindfolded sinners that we are, have to say about His Majesty, except declaring with the inconsequent oscillations of our tongue: “Our hope lies with Your mercy and our reliance in Your favor and forgiveness, and our trust in the generosity and magnanimity of Your Holy Essence, as expressed in the prayers of Your friends:

الکَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی

جعْفرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قالَ: قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: قالَ اللهُ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى: لا يَتَّكِلِ العامِلُونَ لِى عَلى أَعْمالِهِمُ الَّتِى يَعْمَلُونَها لِثَوابِى، فَإنَّهُمْ لَو إجْتَهَدُوا وَأَتْعَبُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ - أَعْمارَهُمْ - فِى عِبادَتِى كانُوا مُقَصِّرِينَ غَيْرَ بالِغِينَ فِى عِبادَتِهِمْ كُنْهَ عِبادَتِى فِيما يَطْلُبُونَ عِنْدِى مِنْ كَرامَتِى وَالنَّعِيمِ فِى جَنّاتِى وَرَفِيعِ الدَّرَجاتِ العُلَى فِى جِوارِى وَلَكِنْ بِرَحْمَتِى فَلْيَثِقُوا وَفَضْلِى فَلْيَرْجُوا، وَإلَى حُسْنِ الظَّنِّ بِى فَلْيَطْمَئِنُّوا، فَإنَّ رَحْمَتِى عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ تُدْرِكُهُمْ، وَمَنِّى يُبَلِّغُهُمْ رِضْوانِى وَمَغْفِرَتِى تُلْبِسُهُمْ عَفْوِى. فَإنِّى أَنَا اللهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ وَبِذَلِكَ تَسَمَّيْتُ.

Al-Kulayni, in al-Kafi, reports with his chain of narrators from Imam Baqir (A) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said: God, the Sublime and the Blessed, said, "The workers (of deeds) for My sake should not, for My reward, trust the works they have done: for, verily, should they labor and toil for all their lives in My service and worship, they would fall short in their worship and will not attain to the reality of My service in what they seek with Me of My magnanimity and bounty, My paradise and the high stations in My proximity. Rather, they should rely upon My mercy and put hope in My favor and be contented of their good opinion (husn al-zann) of Me; for, verily, therein My mercy will reach them, My good pleasure will go forth to them, and My forgiveness shall envelop them. For, indeed, I am Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful, and I (have been named so on that account."(١)

Contemplation, Fear And Hope

Of things that cause fear of

١- Al-Kafi, II, ٧١, hadith ١.

God, is contemplation of the extremeness of Divine Might, the precision and sharpness of the path (Sirat) of the Hereafter and the perils that man has to face during the days of his life and at death, as well as the hardships of the Purgatory (barzakh) and the Resurrection and the scrutinies of the Reckoning (hisab) and the Balance (mizan). In the same way, reflection over the verses and traditions about the .promises of God Almighty can bring about complete and perfect hope

It is reported in traditions that on the Day of Resurrection God Almighty's mercy shall be so abundant that even Satan will aspire for God's pardon. In this world, at which God has never looked with favor, and on which since its creation His mercy has not descended (in comparison to the other worlds) except for a droplet of it, we encounter so much of the abundance of God's mercy, bounty and care, which has enveloped everything, apparent and the invisible, that the world is a vast table of the bounties and gifts of the Almighty, so widespread that were all the world's intellects attempt to encompass even a fragment of it, they would be unable to do so. If this is so, then what would be a world which is the house of the hospitality of the generous Lord and the abode of the expansive mercy and compassion of the All-merciful and the Compassionate? Of course, .Satan would be justified in his aspiring for His pity

and his hoping from God's generosity. Hence, make perfect your good opinion of Him :and rely upon His grace, as He has declared

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا.)

(Verily, God shall forgive all the sins. (۳۹:۵۳

And immerse all in the ocean of His mercy and beneficence. It is impossible that God should break His promise, although it is possible that He may withdraw His threats, and how often He does that! So gladden your heart with the hope of His mercy, for had it not enveloped you, you would not be a creature; every creature is the recipient :of His mercy, for He has said

(وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ.)

(My mercy embraces all things. (۷:۱۵۶

The Difference Between Hope And Delusion

However, my dear, you should be careful of distinguishing between hope and delusion, for it may be that you be a deluded man, but imagine yourself to be a man of hope. Yet it is easy to distinguish between them on the basis of their grounds. You should reflect over the state of yours that makes you regard it as hope, to see whether that state of yours has come into being as a result of your belittling of Divine commands or as a result of conviction in the all-embracing character of Divine mercy .and the greatness of the Holy Essence

Should that prove to be difficult, the distinction can be made on the basis of their effects. Should the greatness of God be imprinted on the believer's heart and should it be content in the expansive mercy and bounty

of His Holy Essence, he would be committed to His obedience and service, for esteem for someone great and gratitude and willingness to serve one's benefactor are .inviolable features of human nature

Hence, should you be committed to the duties of slavehood and unsparing in your efforts to obey and worship; should you not rely on your works and consider them insignificant; should your hope rest on God's mercy, grace and bounty; should you consider yourself entitled to every kind of blame, disfavor, reproof and wrath on account of your deeds; and should your sole reliance be the mercy and generosity of the Absolutely Magnanimous - should you be such, then you are indeed in possession of the state of hope. Then, thank God Almighty for that, and implore His Holy Essence .to establish it firmly in your heart and to elevate you to a higher degree of it

But if, God forbid, should you be one who belittles and takes lightly the commands of God, one who considers unimportant and insignificant the Words of the Holiest Essence, then rest assured that it is delusion that has appeared in your heart as a result of the guiles of Satan and your carnal self. Had you any faith in God's greatness and His expansive mercy, its effects would have been obvious in you. A claimant whose acts are contrary to his claims is one who falsifies himself, and there are many .traditions to this effect

الكَافِی بإسْنَادِهِ عَنِ ابْنِ أبِی نَجْرانَ، عَمَّنْ ذَكَرَهُ،

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لَهُ: قَومٌ یَعْمَلُونَ بِالمَعَاصِی وَیَقُولُونَ نَرْجُو، فَلا یَزَالُونَ کَذَلِکَ حَتّی یَأْتِیَهُمُ المَوْتُ. فَقَالَ: هَؤُلاءِ قَوْمٌ یَتَرَجَّحُونَ فِی الأَمَانِی. کَذِبُوا، لَیْسُوا بِرَاجِینَ. مَنْ رَجَا شَیْئاً طَلَبَهُ، وَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ شَیءٍ هَرَبَ مِنْهُ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni, with his chain of narrators, reports from Imam al Sadiq (A) on the authority of an unnamed narrator who narrated it to Ibn Abi Najran, that he said to the Imam (A): "There are some people who commit sins and say we are hopeful. They remain in this condition until death comes to them." The Imam said, "They are a people who have been swept away by false hopes. They lie, they are not the hopeful; for verily, one who has hope of something pursues it, and one who fears something flees from it."(1)

Close to this in meaning is another tradition of the noble al-Kafi:

الکَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الحَسَنِ بْنِ أَبِی سَارَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: لا یَکُونُ المُؤْمِنُ مُؤْمِناً حَتَّی یَکُونَ خَائِفاً رَاجِیاً، وَلا یَکُونُ خَائِفاً رَاجِیاً حَتَّی یَکُونَ عَامِلاً لِمَا یَخَافُ وَیَرْجُو.

(Al-Kulayni), with his chain of narrators reports from al-Husayn ibn Abi Sarah that he said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say: "A believer is not but fearful and hopeful, and he is not (truly) fearful and hopeful unless he responds in action in regard to that which he fears and hopes."(2)

Some have said that the person who is hopeful without doing anything is like the one who awaits the result without preparing its needed

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1- Al-Kafi, II, ۶۸, hadith ۵.

2- Al-Kafi, II, ۷۱, hadith ۱۱, from al-Hasan ibn Sarah.

means, like the farmer who awaits a ready harvest without sowing the seeds, without tilling and watering his land and without removing the hindrances in the way of a sufficient produce. Such a man cannot be said to have hope. What characterizes him is stupidity and folly. The similitude of the person who does not reform his morals and acts without refraining from sins, is the farmer who sows his seeds in barren, saline .soil: of course, such farming does not yield any produce

Therefore, the genuine kind of hope is that man should first prepare all the means that are available to him and have been provided to him by the grace of God Almighty, Who has also guided him regarding the paths of right and corrupt conduct and commanded him to make ready those means, and only then he should wait and hope that God, with His favor, will provide the remaining means over which he has no .power, and remove the hindrances and perils from his path

Hence, when the devotee has cleared the field of his heart of the thorns of moral vices and of the stones, rocks and salinity of sins, sowing therein the seeds of good works and watering it with the clear waters of beneficial knowledge and sincere faith and guarded his field against the pests of pride ('ujb) and ostentation (riya'), which like weeds hinder the wholesome growth of the harvest, then he may sit and wait for God's grace, hoping that the

Almighty may keep him firm and on the straight path until the last moment of his life. :This is the desired and genuine kind of hope, as declared by God Almighty

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِی سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُوْلَئِکَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَهَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.)

But the believers, and those who migrate and struggle in the way of God -those have (hope of God's compassion; and God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (۲:۲۱۳

The noble tradition at its end mentions that neither fear nor hope should exceed one another, and the same thing is stated in the mursal hadith of Ibn Abi 'Umayr from Imam al-Sadiq (A). When man observes his extreme shortcoming in fulfilling the demands of servitude and creaturehood and when he contemplates the narrowness of the path of the Hereafter, a high degree of fear seizes him. And when he observes his own sins and reflects over the condition of those persons who were righteous at the start but fell into wretchedness and departed from the world in a state of unbelief and without good works, ultimately meeting an evil goal, his fear is intensified. And in :a noble tradition of al-Kafi, Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said

الْمُؤْمِنُ بَيْنَ مَخَافَتَيْنِ: ذَنْبٍ قَدْ مَضَى لا يَدْرِى مَا صَنَعَ اللهُ فِيهِ وَعُمُرٍ قَدْ بَقِىَ لا يَدْرِى مَا يَكْتَسِبُ فِيهِ مِنَ المَهَالِكِ. فَهُوَ لا يُصْبِحُ إلا خَائِفاً وَلا يُصْلِحُهُ إلا الخَوْفُ.

The believer stands between two dreadful things: the past sins, regarding which he does not know what God will do (with

him), and the remainder of his life, regarding which he does not know what mortal sins he will commit therein. So he does not wake up except in a state of dread, and (nothing keeps him righteous except fear.(۱)

The same thing is stated in the sermon of the Noble Messenger (S) reported in a hadith of Imam al-Sadiq (A) in al-Kafi.(۲) The gist of the matter is that the self is in a state of utter imperfection and shortcoming, and God at the height of greatness, glory, all-embracing mercifulness and grace, and the devotee is always in a median state of fear and hope between these two views. And since the Divine attributes of glory and perfection cast their light simultaneously on the wayfarer's heart, none of .the two, fear or hope, exceeds the other

Some have said that sometimes fear is more beneficial for man -as in the state of health and robustness - in order that he may endeavor in attaining perfection and performing good works, and that hope is better in some conditions - as when the signs of approaching death appear - so that man may meet God in a state which He loves more. But this opinion does not agree with the above discussion and the traditions mentioned, for the genuine and lovable hope also induces one to good works and hereafterly conduct. Fear of God is also always desirable and is not .contrary to confirmed hope in Him

And some have said that fear is not

.Al-Kafi, hadith ۱۲ -۱

.Al-Kafi, hadith ۲ -۲

a moral or intellectual merit in the Hereafter, and that its benefit is limited to the world, which is the abode of works and; deeds, for inducing obedience and service and for restraining men from sin. It is of no use after this world is left behind. On the other hand, hope rill never end and shall endure in the Hereafter, for the more of God's beneficence man receives, the more does he aspire to 'His grace and bounty, because the stores of God's mercy axe inexhaustible. Hence, fear comes to an end, .while hope continues

The Opinion Of Al-Majlisi

The great muhaddith al-'Allamah al-Majlisi (M) says, "The truth is that as long as the devotee is in the abode of duty, i.e. this world, he is bound to have both fear and hope. However, after his witnessing of the matters of the Hereafter, one of them, of ".necessity, must surpass the other

This writer says: That which has been said regarding the dominance of fear or hope in the Hereafter does not agree with the above discussion about the meaning of hope and fear. Even if supposedly true, it would apply only to those of middle stations, for the state of the elect and the awliya' is different from that; for their witnessing of the Divine majesty and glory and the irradiations (tajilliyat) of the Names of love and beauty, which are attained in the heart, are not effaced by the witnessing of the matters of the Hereafter; as a result their fear and hope

.do not surpass each other

Rather, the effects of Divine majesty and glory and the irradiations of His beauty and love are greater in the world of the Hereafter, and the awe resulting from God's majesty is one of the spiritual pleasures, which on reflection will not be found to be :contrary to the noble verse

(أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.)

(Surely God's friends - no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow. (۱۰:۶۲

And that which has been said regarding fear, that it is not a spiritual merit—it is not true of the awe in front of God's greatness and glory, for it is an excellence and is more intense in those of perfect and complete character (kamilun, mukammalun) than others. And praise belongs to Allah, for His majesty and His beauty, and may His .benedictions be upon Muhammad and his Family

Fifteenth Hadith: The Believer's Trials And Tribulations

point

بِسَنَدی المُتَّصِلِ إلی مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ، عَنْ سُمَاعَةَ، عَنْ أَبی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ فِی كِتَابِ عَلِیٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ بَلاءً النَّبِيُّونَ، ثُمَّ الوَصِيُّونَ، ثُمَّ الأَمْثَلَ فَالأَمْثَلَ. وَإنَّمَا يُبْتَلی المُؤْمِنُ عَلَی قَدْرِ أَعْمَالِهِ الحَسَنَةِ، فَمَنْ صَحَّ دِينُهُ وَحَسُنَ عَمَلُهُ اشْتَدَّ بَلاؤُهُ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا ثَوَاباً لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلا عُقُوبَةً لِكَافِرٍ، وَمَنْ سَخُفَ دِينُهُ وَضَعُفَ عَمَلُهُ قَلَّ بَلاؤُهُ، وَإنَّ البَلاءَ أَسْرَعُ إلَی المُؤْمِنِ التَّقِيِّ مِنَ المَطَرِ إلَی قَرَارِ الأَرْضِ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from Ibn Mahbub, from

Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he (A) said: “Verily, it is mentioned in the Book of ‘Ali that of all mankind the prophets undergo the severest of trials, and after them the awsiya’, and after them the elect to the extent of their nobility. Indeed, the believer undergoes trial in proportion to his good deeds. So one whose faith is sound and whose deeds are good, his trials are also more severe. That is indeed because God Almighty did not make this world a place for rewarding the believer and punishing the unbeliever. And one whose faith is feeble and whose (good) deeds are few faces fewer tribulations. Verily, tribulations hasten towards the believer with greater speed than rainwater (towards the earth’s depths.”(١)

Exposition

Some have said by nas (people, mankind) in this noble tradition and its like are meant perfect human beings (kamilun) such as the prophets and the awsiya’, and that in reality it is they who are the nas, whereas other people are lil-nas (for the people), as .mentioned in some traditions

However, that interpretation does not apply here and it seems proper that mankind and people in general should have been meant in this place. This is evident from the other traditions of this chapter of al-Kafi, and if it has been said in some traditions that by nas are meant the kamilun, it does not mean that the word has this meaning in every place that it occurs. Also, bala’ means trial, test and examination, and it

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.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.۲۵۹, hadith No.۲۹ -۱

applies to the good as well as the bad among people, and the lexicographers have :stated this expressly. Al-Jawhari in al-Sihah says in this regard

وَالبَلاءُ الإِخْتِبَارُ يَكُونُ بِالشَّرِّ وَالخَيْرِ. يُقَالُ: أَبْلاهُ الله بَلاءً حَسَناً. وَأَبْلَيْتُهُ مَعْرُوفاً.

:And God Almighty' says

(وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا.)

(And that He may try the believers with a fair trial. (۸:۱۷

All that with which God, to Whom belongs Glory and Majesty, tries His servants is bala' and ibtila', whether it is one of the diseases and ailments, or adversities like poverty, humiliation and loss of worldly fortunes, or a thing of an opposite kind such as acquisition of power and glory, wealth, riches, high status, honor, and the like. However, whenever bala', baliyyah or ibtila' and the like are mentioned, it is the :'former kind of things that are meant. Amthal means 'nobler and better

يُقَالُ: هَذَا أَمْثَلُ مِنْ هَذَا. أَيْ أَفْضَلَ وَأَدْنَى إِلَى الخَيْرِ.

means that one who is better and nobler after the (ثُمَّ الأَمْثَلَ فَالأَمْثَلَ) Hence, the phrase prophets and the awsiya' has to face a severer kind of bala' than the others, and those who are better and nobler than others after them have to face a severer degree of trial. The degree of the severity of bala' is in accordance with the decree of .does not exist in Persian (ثُمَّ الأَمْثَلَ فَالأَمْثَلَ merit. This kind of expression (i.e., like

Sukhf' means 'feebleness of the rational faculty' or 'foolishness', as mentioned by al-' Sihah, and other lexicographical works. Qarar means 'resting place,' as mentioned in

:the dictionaries

القَرَارُ وَالقَرَارَهُ: مَا قَرَّ فِيهِ والمُطْمَئِنُّ مِنَ الأَرْضِ.

The apology means that in the same way as the earth is the resting place where rainwater comes to rest and abide, the believer is the resting place of sufferings and tribulations, which rush toward him, come to rest in him, and do not depart from him. God willing, we will mention that which is needed for the exposition of this noble .tradition in the course of a few sections

The Meaning Of Trial

Let it be known to you that the human souls exist at a level of potentiality from the beginning of their origin, their attachment to the bodies, and their descent to the realm of corporeal existence (mulk), in respect of all things, including knowledge, good and evil traits, and all kinds of perceptive and behavioral faculties. Gradually they move from potentiality to actuality with the grace of God, the Almighty and the Sublime. At first, weak impressions related to particulars (as opposed to universals) emerge in the soul, such as impressions of touch and other outward senses, moving .from the lower to the higher

Following that, the inward perceptions also arise in it. However, all its faculties exist only at a level of potentiality, and they do not grow without proper stimulation. For instance, if the base kind of faculties come to dominate it, it becomes disposed to ugliness and evil, for its inner powers, such as shahwah (lust), ghadhab (anger), etc., impel it towards sin, licentiousness, aggression and tyranny. After following them

.for some time it grows into a strange monster and a highly grotesque devil

However, since the grace and mercy of God Almighty have been accompanying the Children of Adam since eternity, He bestowed upon them two educators and teachers which are like two wings with which they can fly from the depths of ignorance, defectiveness, ugliness and wretchedness to the heights of knowledge, perfection; beauty and felicity, and deliver themselves from the narrow valley of nature to reach the expansive and open horizons of the realms of the spirit (malakut). The first of these is the faculty of intellect and discernment, which is the inner teacher; and the second, the outward teacher, is represented by the prophets and the divine guides .who shove the path of felicity as distinct from the ways of wretchedness

None of these two can singly achieve this end without the other. For the human intellect by itself can neither identify the paths of felicity and wretchedness nor find the way to the hidden world and the realm of Hereafterly existence. Similarly, the guidance of the prophets cannot be effective without the exercise of the discerning .faculties of the intellect

Thus God, the Beneficent and the Sublime, gave them these two educators so that through them all the potentialities and hidden faculties and capacities, latent in the human soul, should be realized and actualized. God Almighty blessed them with these two great bounties in order to try and test human beings, for it is through these bounties

that individual human beings are separated into the felicitous and the wretched, the obedient and the rebellious, the perfect and the defective. And so the Great Wali of God said:

وَالَّذِى بَعَثَهُ بِالحَقِّ، لَتُبَلْبَلُنَّ بَلْبَلَهً وَلَتُغَرْبَلُنَّ غَرْبَلَهً.

And by Him Who sent him (the Prophet (S)) with the Truth, you shall indeed be mixed and intermingled and then separated in the sieve (of Divine trial and tribulation)?(١)

In the noble al-Kafi, in the chapter relating to Divine test and trial (bab al-tamhis wa al-'imtihan), Ibn Abi Ya'fur reports Imam al-Sadiq (A) as having said:

قَالَ: لا بُدَّ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ أنْ يُمَحَّصُوا وَيُمَيَّزُوا وَيُغَرْبَلُوا وَيُسْتَخْرَجَ فِى الغِرْبَالِ خَلْقٌ كَثِيرٌ.

It is inevitable that mankind should be purified, separated and sieved so that a great number is excluded by the sieve.(٢)

Also al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Mansur the following tradition:

قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا مَنْصُورُ إنَّ هَـذَا الأَمْرَ لا يَأْتِيكُمْ إلا بَعْـدَ إِيَاسٍ وَلا واللهِ حَتَّى تُمَيَّزُوا وَلا وَاللهِ حَتَّى تُمَحَّصُوا وَلا وَاللهِ حَتَّى يَشْقَى مَنْ يَشْقَى وَيَسْعَدُ مَنْ يَسْعَدُ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "O Mansur! Indeed this affair (i.e. the appearance of al-Mahdi (A)) will not come to you except after despair and not, by God, until you have been separated, and not, by God, until you have been purified, and not, by God, until the wretched attain wretchedness and the felicitous attain felicity."(٣)

In another tradition, Abu al-Hasan (A) is reported to have said:

يُخْلَصُونَ كَمَا يُخْلَصُ الذَّهَبُ.

You shall be purified in the way gold is purified.(۴)

In al-Kafi, bab al-'ibtila' wa al-'ikhtibar, the following tradition is

۱- Nahj al-balaghah, Khutbah No.۱۶.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, vol II, p.۳۷۰, hadith No.۲.

۳- Usul al-Kafi, vol II, p.۳۷۰, hadith No.۲.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, hadith No.۴:

:(reported with isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A

قَالَ: مَا مِنْ قَبْضٍ وَلا بَسْطٍ إلا وَللهِ فِيهِ مَشِيئَةٌ وَقَضَاءٌ وَابْتِلاءٌ.

He said, “There is no qabd (extension) and bast (contraction) except that in it there is (for God a purpose, a decree, and a trial.”(1)

:In another tradition he is (A) reported to have said

إنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ فِيهِ قَبْضٌ أَوْ بَسْطٌ مِمَّا أَمَرَ اللهُ بِهِ أَوْ نَهَى عَنْهُ إلا وَفِيهِ للهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ابْتَلاءٌ وَقَضَاءٌ.

Indeed there is no qabd and bast in that which God has commanded or forbidden (except that there is in it from God a trial and a decree?(2)

Qabd means imsak (withholding), man’ (obstruction, prevention) and akhdh (seizure). Bast is nashr (unfolding, spreading, resurrection) and ‘ata’ (gift, bestowal). Hence every gift, expansion and obstruction, and every command, prohibition and duty is for .the sake of trial

Thus we came to know that the sending of prophets and the revelation of heavenly scriptures is all for the sake of the separation of humanity, of the separation of the wretched from the happy and the felicitous, of the obedient from the sinful. And the meaning of Divine testing and examination is this very separation of men from one another, not the knowledge of their separateness, because the knowledge of God Almighty is pre-eternal; it encompasses all things prior to their creation. The hukama’ have elaborately discussed the reality of trial and ibtila’ and it is beyond the scope of .this exposition to mention their opinions

In any case, the result of this trial and examination

1- Usul al-Kafi, vol. I, p.۱۵۲.

2- Usul al-Kafi, vol. I, p.۱۵۲.

is the separation of the felicitous from the wretched. In the course of it the proof (hujjah) of God is established against the creatures. Thereafter, their life, felicity and salvation, or their destruction and damnation occurs after the establishment of the proof and testimony (bayyinah), and there remains no room for objection for anyone. One who attains felicity and eternal life does so through Divine succor and guidance, .for God has bestowed all the means of attaining them

Also, one who earns wretchedness and falls into destruction, following Satan and his carnal self, his wretchedness and damnation are also earned by him out of his own free will, because he does so despite the availability of all the means of guidance and felicity. The conclusive proof of God is established against him and there is no room :for any pretext. Hence the Qur'an says

(لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ.)

(For it (the soul) is what it has earned and against it is what it has merited. (۲:۲۸۶

The Prophets And Divine Trial

It was mentioned earlier that every act of the human being, or rather every event that occurs in the realm of the body and is related to the soul's perceptions, leaves a kind of impression in the self. This is true of both good and evil deeds (whose impression upon the soul is mentioned in traditions as the appearance of a 'white dot' .or a 'black dot' respectively) as well as of pleasures and pains

,For instance, every experience of pleasure, derived either from food

drink, sex or something else, leaves an impression upon the soul and creates or increases the love and attachment for that kind of, pleasure in the soul. The more that one plunges into such pleasures and lusts, the greater becomes the self's love and attachment for this world and its reliance upon it. Thus the self is nourished with the .love of the world and trained in accordance with it

The greater the sensual pleasures that it derives, the stronger become the roots of this love; and the more the available means of comfort and luxury, the sturdier becomes the tree of attachment to the world. And the. more the soul's attention is directed towards the world, the greater is proportionately its negligence toward God and the world of the Hereafter. Thus when this reliance upon the world becomes complete, the soul assumes a worldly and materialistic form, and the absence of attention towards God Almighty and the 'realm of His munificence and bounty also :becomes total and complete. It is about such a soul that, the Qur'an says

(أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ.)

(He inclined towards the earth and followed his lust. (۷:۱۷۶

The inevitable result of this inner immersion in the sea of pleasure and lust is the love of the world, and the love of the world creates antipathy towards that which is unlike it; attention towards the corporeal realm (mulk) brings negligence towards the .(spiritual world (malakut

,On the contrary, if one has a bad and painful experience of something

the impression of that experience creates an antipathy in the soul. The stronger that impression is, the greater is that inward antipathy. For instance, if after moving to a city one has to face there numerous torments and ailments and undergo outer and inner adversities, he will inevitably abhor that place. The greater the number of adversities that he faces therein, the more will be his abhorrence for that place. If he knows a better place, he will migrate to it, and if he is unable to make the journey, his .heart will migrate and go out to the city of his liking

Thus if a man faces adversities, pain and torments in this world and is overtaken therein by waves of calamities and tribulations, he will inevitably come to resent it. His attachment to it will diminish and he will come to distrust it. If he believed in another world, a vast world free of every kind of pain and grief, he will inevitably want to migrate to it, and if he were unable to make the journey physically, he will send his .heart out to it

Moreover, it is evident that all the spiritual, moral and behavioral evils arise from the love of the world and negligence of God Almighty and the Hereafter. The love of the world is the source of all sins, in the same way as the love of God, the aspiration for the eternal abode of His bounty, the renunciation of the world and absence of

reliance upon and trust in its adornments are the source of all spiritual cures and .moral and behavioral reform

After these preliminaries we come to know that whenever God Almighty has a greater consideration and love for someone, and when someone is the object of the mercy of His Sacred Essence to a greater extent, He restrains him from this world and its charms with the waves of calamity and tribulation, so that his soul turns away in disgust from the world and its adornments and turns his face and his heart, to the extent of his faith, toward the world of the Hereafter. If there weren't any other reason except this one for endurance of severe calamities it would have been .sufficient, and a noble tradition also points towards this matter

عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَیَتَعَاهَدُ المُؤْمِنَ بِالبَلاءِ کَمَا یَتَعَاهَدُ الرَّجُلُ أَهْلَهُ بِالهَدِیَّهِ مِنَ الغَیْبَهِ وَیَحْمِیهِ الدُّنْیَا کَمَا یَحْمِی الطَّبِیبُ المَرِیضَ.

Imam al-Baqir (A) said "Verily, God Almighty treats the believer with tribulations in the same way as a man treats his family with gifts after an absence (upon a journey), and He restrains him from the world in the same way as the physician prescribes (restraints for the sick man."(١)

The same thing is said in another hadith, and one should not imagine that God's love and the great care of His Sacred Essence for some people is - God be our refuge - extravagant and pointless. Rather, with every step that a faithful servant of

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.۲۵۵, hadith No.۱۷ -۱

God takes towards Him, God's grace turns towards him and the Almighty moves closer to him. The similitude of the degrees of faith and the availability of the means of Divine succor is that of a man moving with a lamp in darkness; with every step that he takes forward, some more of the path in front of him is illuminated, which allows him to take another step forward. With every step that a man takes forward on the path of the Hereafter, that path appears clearer to him and God's grace upon him increases, preparing the means of attention towards the world of Divine proximity .and of antipathy towards the world of separation and distance

The pre-eternal grace of God Almighty upon the prophets and the awliya' is on account of His pre-eternal knowledge of their obedience during their terms of duty. For instance, if you have two children about whom you have prior knowledge in their childhood that one of them will bring you satisfaction while the other will grow up to cause you displeasure and resentment, your love for the obedient child would be .greater from the very beginning

God's Remembrance

Another point relating to the severity of the tribulations of the elect among God's servants is that they are made to remember God on account of these adversities and tribulations and to pray and lament in front of His Sacred Essence. This makes them accustomed to remember Him and keep their thoughts busy with Him. It is natural for human

beings to seek and learn upon what they think is a source of support in times of 'adversity. In times of comfort and welfare they forget and neglect it. And since the elect know no source of support other than God, their attention turns towards Him, they putting their sole reliance in His sacred station, and God Almighty, also, with the love that He has for them, prepares the means of that undivided attention and .reliance

However, this, as well as the foregoing point, is not true of the prophets and the perfect awliya', for their station is too high in sanctity and their heart too firm in faith for them to develop attachment for worldly things on account of such things (as comfort and welfare) or for them to waver in their sole reliance upon God. This may be so because the prophets and the perfect awliya' have, through their inward light and spiritual experience, ascertained that God Almighty has no regard for this world and its adornments and that everything therein is base and lowly in the eyes of His Sacred Essence, and for this reason they have preferred poverty to wealth, tribulation to comfort and ease, and adversity to that which is unlike it. Several noble traditions .also support this view

It is mentioned in the hadith that Gabriel brought the key of the earth's treasures to the Seal of the Prophets (S) and said to him (S) that should he (S) accept it, nothing would diminish from

his (S) Hereafterly stations. But the Prophet (S) did not accept it for the sake of .humility before God Almighty and chose poverty

In the noble al-Kafi, al-Kulayni, with a chain of transmitters reaching up to Imam al-Sadiq (A), reports the Imam (A) as having said:

إنَّ الكَافِرَ لَيَهُونُ عَلَى اللهِ حَتَّى لَوْ سَأَلَهُ الدُّنْيَا بِمَا فِيهَا أَعْطَاهُ ذَلِكَ.

Indeed God has so little regard for the unbeliever that should he ask of Him the world (and that which is in it, He would give that to him.(١

And this is due to the worthlessness of the world in the eyes of the Almighty. It is mentioned in the hadith that from the time that the Almighty created the corporeal .world, He did not look at it with favor

Another point related to the severity of the believer's tribulations that has been mentioned in traditions is that there are certain stations for the believers which they cannot attain without undergoing suffering, pain and affliction. It is possible that these afflictions are the corporeal forms of the degrees of renunciation of the world and devotion to God, and it is also possible that these sufferings have celestial forms (suwar al-malakuti) which cannot be realized without their occurrence in the corporeal world and afflictions therein. Imam al-Sadiq (A), in a noble tradition of al-Kafi with a continuous chain of transmission going up to him, states:

قَالَ: إنَّهُ لَيَكُونُ لِلْعَبْدِ مَنْزِلَةٌ عِنْدَ اللهِ فَمَا يَنَالُهَا إلا بِإحْدَى خِصْلَتَيْنِ؛ إمَّا بِذَهَابِ مَالِهِ أوْ بِبَلِيَّةٍ فِى جَسَدِهِ.

Verily, the servant has certain

.Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.۲۵۵, hadith No.۱۷ -۱

stations near God that cannot be realized without one of these two attributes: either (the loss of his wealth or affliction in his body.(١)

In a tradition relating to the martyrdom of the Doyen of the Martyrs (Imam al-Husayn) (A) it is mentioned that he (A) saw the Prophet (S) in a dream. The Prophet (S) said to that mazlum, "There is a station for you in the Paradise which you cannot attain except through martyrdom." The celestial form of martyrdom cannot be attained without its occurrence in the corporeal realm, as has been demonstrated in the higher sciences. It is mentioned in mutawatir traditions that for every action there is a corresponding form in the other world, and al Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to :have said in al-Kafi that

إنَّ عَظِيمَ الأَجْرِ لَمَعَ عَظِيمِ البَلاءِ. وَمَا أَحَبَّ اللهُ قَوْماً إلا ابْتَلاهُمْ.

The greatness of man's reward goes with the greatness of suffering, and God did not (love a people but that He subjected them to suffering.(٢)

.There are many traditions containing this theme

The Prophets' Suffering

:The great muhaddith al-Majlisi (M) says

These traditions relating to the tribulations of the prophets, which have been narrated both through Sunni and Shi'i chains of transmission (turuq), clearly indicate that the prophets and the awliya' differ from others in respect of ailments and bodily afflictions. Rather, they have a greater right than others to suffer on account of their great reward which is responsible for the loftiness of their stations. And this suffering is not only not contrary

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.۲۵۵ -۱

.Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.۲۵۵ -۲

to their station, it even causes the confirmation of their affair. Should they not undergo afflictions, despite the manifestation of miracles and extraordinary things at their hands, people might say such things about them as the Christians did about their .prophet. This explanation is also mentioned in traditions

The subtle researcher and the great, sacred philosopher al-Tusi, may God fill his grave with aroma, states in al-Tajrid: "Of the things that the prophets should be free from is that which is regarded as abhorrent." And the Allamah of the ulama of Islam (al-Allamah al-Hilli) (R) adds in Sharh al-Tajrid that the prophets should be free from such abhorrent diseases as absence of urinary control, leprosy and leukoderma, for .their abhorrent character is contrary to the aim of prophecy

This writer says: The station of prophethood is subject to spiritual levels and excellences and has no relation to corporeality. Hence physical diseases and defects do no harm to the spiritual station of the prophets and affliction with abhorrent diseases diminishes nothing from the sublimity and greatness of their station, although they may not contribute in a way of confirmation to their (already established) excellences and degrees of sublimity. But that which these two researchers have said is also not devoid of validity. This is because the common people cannot make a distinction between the two stations (of spirituality and corporeality) and imagine that physical defectiveness is related or caused by spiritual .defectiveness

Hence they consider some defects as being contrary to the high

and great station of the prophets. Hence Divine grace dictates that the prophets who are messengers and bringers of Divine Shari’ah should not be afflicted with such diseases as are considered disgusting and abominable by the people. Therefore, the absence of this kind of affliction is not because it is harmful to the station of prophethood, but for the sake of maximizing the effectiveness of the prophetic mission of communicating the Divine teachings (tabligh). Hence there is nothing wrong if some prophets without a Shari’ah, great awliya’ and the faithful are afflicted with this kind of afflictions, as in the case of Hadrat Ayyub (Job) and Habib al-Najjar. There are many traditions concerning the affliction of Hadrat Ayyub (A), of which are :the following two

رُوِیَ فِی تَفْسِیرِ عَلِیِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِیمَ عَنْ أَبِی بَصِیرٍ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فِی حَدِیثٍ طَوِیلٍ، قَالَ: فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَی بَدَنِهِ مَا خَلا عَقْلَهُ وَعَیْنَهُ فَنَفَخَ فِیهِ إِبْلِیسُ فَصَارَ قَرْحَهً وَاحِدَهً مِنْ قَرْنِهِ إِلَی قَدَمِهِ. فَبَقِیَ فِی ذَلِکَ دَهْراً طَوِیلاً یَحْمَدُ اللهَ وَیَشْکُرُهُ حَتَّی وَقَعَ فِی بَدَنِهِ الدُّودُ. وَکَانَتْ تَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَدَنِهِ فَیَرُدُّهَا وَیَقُولُ لَهَا ارْجِعِی إِلَی مَوْضِعِکِ الَّذِی خَلَقَکِ اللهُ مِنْهُ. وَنَتُنَ حَتَّی أَخْرَجَهُ أَهْلُ الْقَرْیَهِ مِنَ الْقَرْیَهِ وَأَلْقَوْهُ فِی الْمَزْبَلَهِ خَارِجَ الْقَرْیَهِ.

Ali ibn Ibrahim in a long tradition narrates on the authority of Abu Basir that Imam al-‘ Sadiq (A) said, “Then his whole body, excepting his, intellect and his eyes, was subjected to the disease. Then Iblis blew upon it and it became a single wound (extending from his head to feet. He (Job

remained for a period in that condition, praising and thanking God, until it became infested with worms. Whenever a worm fell off from his body, he would put it back, saying to it, “Return to your place, from where God created you.” And it began to stench until his townsfolk expelled him from his town and his food came from the ”.garbage thrown outside the town

فِی الکَافِی بإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِی بَصِیرٍ، عَنْ أبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لَهُ: (فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ الشَّیْطَانِ الرَّجِیمِ. إِنَّهُ لَیْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَی الَّذِینَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَی رَبِّهِمْ یَتَوَکَّلُونَ.) فَقَالَ: یَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ؛ یُسَلَّطُ وَاللهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ عَلَی بَدَنِهِ وَلا یُسَلَّطُ عَلَی دِینِهِ. قَدْ سُلِّطَ عَلَی أَیُّوبَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فَشَوَّهَ خَلْقَهُ وَلَمْ یُسَلَّطْ عَلَی دِینِهِ وَقَدْ یُسَلَّطُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَی أَبْدَانِهِمْ وَلا یُسَلَّطُ عَلَی دِینِهِمْ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports from Abu Basir that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (A) about the verse, “When thou recitest the Qur’an, seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan, he has no authority over those who believe and trust in their Lord; (his authority is over those who take him for their guardian and ascribe associates to God) (۱۶:۹۸-۱۰۰)” The Imam said, “O Abu Muhammad, by God, He gives authority to him (Satan) over the believer’s body but not over his faith (din). He gave him (Satan) authority over Ayyub and Satan disfigured him physically, but He did not give authority to him over his faith. And He does give him authority over the faithful’s bodies but not

".over their faith

بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ نَاجِيَةٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لأَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إِنَّ الْمُغِيرَةَ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لا يُبْتَلَى بِالْجُذَامِ وَلا بِالْبَرَصِ وَلا بِكَذَا وَلا بِكَذَا؟ فَقَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ لَغَافِلاً عَنْ صَاحِبِ يَاسِينَ. إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُكَنَّعاً. ثُمَّ رَدَّ أَصَابِعَهُ فَقَالَ: كَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى تَكْنِيعِهِ أَتَاهُمْ فَأَنْذَرَهُمْ، ثُمَّ عَادَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنَ الْغَدِ فَقَتَلُوهُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ يُبْتَلَى بِكُلِّ بَلِيَّةٍ وَيَمُوتُ بِكُلِّ مِيتَةٍ إِلا أَنَّهُ لا يُقْتُلُ نَفْسَهُ.

Najiyah says, "I said to Abu Ja'far (A) that al-Mughirah says that a believer is never afflicted with leprosy, leukoderma and such other ailments (is that true?) The Imam replied, 'Didn't he know that the Sahib Ya Sin (Habib al-Najjar, the man mentioned in Surat Ya Sin) was mutilated (mukanna')?' He (A) closed his fingers and said, 'It is as if I see him go to his people in his mutilated state (takannu') to warn them and come back the next day, when they killed him.' Then he added, 'Verily, the believer suffers all kinds of afflictions and dies in all manners of dying except suicide.' "(١)

Sahib Ya Sin is Habib al-Najjar and takannu' (the word is with nun in most of the manuscripts), according to al-Majlisi, means shortening and mutilation. He adds that it was probably leprosy which had resulted in the shortening of his fingers. However, this, as well as many other ahadith, indicate that the believers and prophets are sometimes afflicted with abominable diseases on account of some higher expediency, although there are some other traditions which negate the disfigurement of Hadrat

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١- Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p.٢٥٥.

Ayyub's body and its petrifaction, and not much benefit lies in discussing them further with a view to affecting a reconciliation. On the whole, these kind of diseases do no harm to the condition of believers and do not diminish anything from the station of the prophets (A) rather, they lead to the elevation of their station, and God Almighty .knows best the truth

The World Is Not A Place Of Reward Or Punishment

Let it be known to you that this world, due to its defective, feeble and weak nature, is neither the abode of the reward of God Almighty nor the place of His chastisement and punishment. This is so because the abode of Divine munificence is a realm whose bounties are pure, unadulterated with torment, and its comforts are not mixed with pain and grief. Such bounties are not possible in this world, which is an abode where contradictories throng together and each of whose bounties is mixed with numerous .kinds of pains, hardships and torments

Rather, as the philosophers have said, pleasure in this world lies in avoiding pain. It may be said that even its pleasures cause pain and every one of its pleasures is followed by pain and hardship. Rather, the very material of this world lacks the capacity to accept absolute goodness and unadulterated bounty. In the same way, its pains and hardships, torments and punishments are also mixed; each of its pains and hardships carries within itself some goodness and bounty, and none of its afflictions .and adversities is unmixed

The very material

of this world lacks the capacity to accept pure, absolute punishment, whereas the abode of Divine chastisement is a place where punishment is pure and absolute; its pains and afflictions are not like those of this world, which while they afflict one member of the body are absent from the other members. While the healthy members are in comfort and ease, the afflicted member suffers pain and agony. The noble :tradition partly refers to what we have stated here when it says

وَذَلِکَ أنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ یَجْعَلِ الدُّنْیا ثَوَاباً لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلا عُقُوبَهً لِکَافِرٍ.

That is, the reason that the believer is afflicted in this world with tribulation is that God Almighty has made it neither the place of His reward for the believer nor the place of chastisement for the infidel. This world is the abode of duty and the farm of the Hereafter. It is a place of trade and earning whereas the Hereafter is the abode of .reward and punishment, of bounty and damnation

Those who expect that God Almighty would immediately get hold of one who commits some sin or indecency in this world or perpetrates some injustice or aggression against someone, and cut his hand off and expunge him from the realm of existence, are unaware that their expectation is contrary to this world's order and opposed to .God's wont and sunnah

Here is the place of trial and the zone of the separation of the wretched from the felicitous and the sinful from the obedient. Here

is the realm of the manifestation of deeds, not the abode of the emergence of the results of personal deeds and qualities. If occasionally God Almighty does take hold of an oppressor, it may be said that it is due to the Almighty's mercy for that oppressor (for it stops him from sinning further). For, when God Almighty leaves the sinful and the tyrants to themselves, His wrath takes the form of istidraj, the gradual seizing.

Hence, God Almighty declares:

(سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ. وَأُمْلِى لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِى مَتِينٌ.)

(And those who cry lies to Our signs), We will draw them on little by little whence they know not; and I respite them - assuredly My guile is firm. (٧:١٨٢-١٨٣)

And He also says:

(وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمْلِى لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمْلِى لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ.)

And let not the unbelievers suppose that the respite We grant them is better for them; We grant them respite only that they may increase in sin; and there awaits them a humiliating chastisement. (٣:١٧٨)

In Majma' al-bayan, this tradition is cited from Imam al-Sadiq (A):

إِذَا أَحْدَثَ العَبْدُ ذَنْباً جُدِّدَ لَهُ نِعْمَةٌ فَيَدَعُ الإِسْتِغْفَارَ فَهُوَ الإِسْتِدْرَاجُ.

The Imam (A) said, "When a person commits a sin and the bounty (that he had received) is renewed for him, he leaves off asking for forgiveness (istighfar), and this is al-'istidraj (as mentioned in verse ٧:١٨٢)."

At the end of the noble tradition, the Imam (A) says:

وَمَنْ سَخُفَ دِينُهُ وَضَعُفَ عَمَلُهُ قَلَّ بَلاؤُهُ.

And one whose faith is feeble and

.his intellect is weak, his tribulation is also slight

This shows that tribulations are both bodily and spiritual, for the persons of weak intellects and feeble sensibility are secure from spiritual tribulations and intellectual suffering in proportion to their intellectual weakness and the feebleness of their .sensibility

On the contrary, those with more complete intellects and acuter sensibility have to undergo spiritual tribulations more intensely in proportion to the perfectness and acuteness of their intellect and sensibility. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Holy :Messenger (S) said

مَا أُوذِىَ نَبِيٌّ مِثْلَ مَا أُوذِيتُ.

.No prophet was tormented to the extent that I was

This complaint of the Prophet (S) refers to this point, for whoever perceives the greatness and glory of the Lord to a greater extent and knows the sacred station of God Almighty more than others, he suffers more and is tormented to a greater extent .by the sins of the creatures and their offences against the Lord’s sanctity

Also, one who has a greater love and compassion for the creatures of God is tormented to a greater extent by their crooked and wretched condition and ways. And, of course, the Seal of the Prophets (S) was more perfect in all these stations and higher than all of the prophets and the awliya’ in respect of his degree of excellence and perfection. Hence his torment and suffering was greater than that of any one of them. There is also another explanation of the Holy Messenger’s statement, whose mention is not

.appropriate for this place

وَاللهُ العَالِمُ وَلَهُ الحَمْدُ.

.And God knows best and to Him belongs all the praise

(Sixteenth Hadith: Patience (Sabr

point

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى رَضِىَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحابِنَا، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ النُّعْمَانِ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ مَسْكَانَ، عَنْ أَبِى بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: إنَّ الحُرَّ حُرٌّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ أحْوَالِهِ. إنْ نَابَتْهُ نَائِبَةٌ صَبَرَ لَهَا وَإنْ تَدَاكَّتْ عَلَيْهِ المَصَائِبُ لَمْ تَكْسِرْهُ وَإنْ أُسِرَ وَقُهِرَ وَاسْتُبْدِلَ بِاليُسْرِ عُسْراً كَمَا كَانَ يُوسُفُ الصِّدِّيقُ الأمِينُ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ يَضْرُرْ حُرِّيَّتَهُ أَنْ اسْتُعْبِدَ وَقُهِرَ وَأُسِرَ وَلَمْ تَضْرُرْهُ ظُلْمَةُ الجُبِّ وَوَحْشَتُهُ وَمَا نَالَهُ أَنْ مَنَّ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ فَجَعَلَ الجَبَّارَ العَاتِىَ لَهُ عَبْداً بَعْدَ إذْ كَانَ [لَهُ] مَالِكاً. فَأَرْسَلَهُ وَرَحِمَ بِهِ أُمَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ الصَّبْرُ يُعَقِّبُ خَيْراً.فَاصْبِرُوا وَوَطِّنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ عَلى الصَّبْرِ تُؤْجَرُوا.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from a group of his teachers, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from his father, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from 'Abd Allah ibn Muskan, from Abu Basir, who says, "I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say, 'A free human being is free in all circumstances. Should a misfortune befall him he bears it with patience (sabr). If calamities strike him, they don't shatter him. If taken captive and subdued; he turns hardship into ease, as was the case of Joseph, the truthful and trustworthy (A). His freedom saved him from harm, although he was enslaved, subdued, and imprisoned. The darkness of the pit, the dread and whatever befell him did him no harm, until God favored him and

made the insolent tyrant, who had been his master, his slave. Then God made him His apostle and through him was merciful to a people. In this way patience is followed by (good. So be patient and reconcile yourself to patience in order to be rewarded."(١)

Exposition

Naibah' is the singular of nawa'ib, which means 'events' and 'accidents' and according to al-Sihah means misfortune (musibah). Dakka is synonymous with daqqa, which means 'to is conjoined to pound', crush', 'grind', and 'to knock'. Al-Sihah says: دَكَكْتُ الشَّيْءَ أَدُكُّهُ دَكّاً إِذَا ضَرَبْتُهُ وَكَسَرْتُهُ حَتَّى سَوَّيْتُهُ بِالأَرْضِ, It also remarks تَدَاكَّتْ عَلَيْهِ: أَيْ تَدَاقَّتْ.

This world also gives the sense of swarming, crowding and pressing together (ijtima' and izdiham), as mentioned in al-Nihayah. In a hadith, Amir al-Muminin (A) is reported to have said:(٢) ثُمَّ تَدَاكَكْتُمْ عَلَيَّ تَدَاكُكَ الإِبِلِ الهِيمِ عَلَى حِياضِها, means إِزْدَحَمْتُمْ.

According to al-Nihayah, dakka also means casara (to break). In the present noble tradition, the former meaning is more appropriate in view of the phrase لَمْ تَكْسِرْهُ following it, although the second meaning also fits here. The preposition و in وإنْ أَسِرَ signifies wusliyyah and is conjoined to it. Al Majlisi (M) states that it is وَقُهِرَ وَاسْتُبْدِلَ in some manuscripts, and is accordingly conjoined to لَمْ تَكْسِرْهُ, thus making it وَاسْتُبْدِلَ بِاليُسْرِ عُسْراً the result of sabr.

The phrase أَنْ اسْتُعْبِدَ is the passive participle and لَمْ يَضْرُرْ is the active subject of the verbal sentence. In Mir'at al Uqul it is اسْتُعْبِدَ, and appears as اسْتُعْبِدَ in Wasa'il al-Shi'ah.

١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, Kitab al- iman wa al-kufr, bab al-sabr, ١٢٨. hadith No. ۶.

٢- Ibn al-'Athir, al-Nihayah, ii, ١٢٨.

It seems that it is a calligraphers error in the manuscript of the Mir'at , although its meaning is not totally invalid. However, that which is in Wasa'il is more in agreement , ظُلْمَةُ الجُبِّ is conjoined to وَمَا نَالَهُ .with the totality and content of the noble tradition implying that Joseph was not harmed by that which he suffered at his brothers hands, .nor by grief and adversity

until) and relates) إلى it appears that it involves the ellipsis of , أَنْ مَنَّ اللهُ ,As to the phrase in two possible yet conflicting ways. Al-Majlisi (M) has mentioned several لَمْ تَضْرُرْ to possible meanings of it whose description is not devoid of prolixity. The meaning of the master of Joseph (A) becoming his slave is that he became subservient and .(obedient to him (A

Desire, The Source Of All Bondage

Let it be known to you that in a man subjugated to the domination of lust and carnal desire, his servitude, servility and indignity increase in proportion to the intensity of their domination; for servitude means complete submission and obedience. The man obedient to lusts and subjugated to the carnal self is their obedient slave. He submissively obeys whatever they command and is a humble and obedient servant and slave in front of them. This obedience reaches a limit when he prefers obedience to them to obedience to the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He prefers their .service to the service of the real King of kind

In that state, honor, dignity and freedom

depart from his heart on which then settle the dusts of indignity, destitution and servitude. He becomes humble before worldly people and his heart bows down in prostration before them and before the possessors of worldly power and glory. In order to achieve the objects of his carnal desires and to satisfy the craving of his belly .and underneath, he submits to all kinds of disgrace and indignities

As long as he remains in the bondage of lust and the carnal self, he does not abstain from violating the demands of honor, freedom and chivalry. He readily submits to the obedience of anyone, and is willing to accept favor from any insignificant person, as soon as he sees the probability of attaining his objective through his means, even if that person is the meanest and basest of all creation and even if the probability involved is something imaginary. And it is said that mere fancy is the proof of the .greedy

The servants of lust and mundane ambition have put on the shackles of slavery to carnal desire. They are ready to be slaves of anyone whom they know or imagine to be of worldly benefit to them. If verbally they declare themselves to be chaste and honorable, such lip service to honor is mere deception, for their words and deeds contradict such a declaration. This servility and captivity is a thing which always causes man to undergo suffering, pain, dishonor and distress. Hence a man with a sense of honor

and dignity should seriously strive to cleanse himself of this abomination by all means and deliver himself from this bondage. Such purification and emancipation can only be attained through a fundamental treatment, which takes place through curative .knowledge and action

As to curative action, it consists of religious exercises and opposition to the carnal self. Over a period of time these free the soul from excessive love of the world and the pursuit of carnal lust and desire, until it becomes accustomed to virtues and moral excellences. As to curative knowledge, it lies in making oneself understand and causing this to enter into his heart that other creatures are as weak, needy, dependent and impoverished as himself. He should tell his heart, "Since all other creatures are, like me, dependent, in matters big and small, on Him Who is absolutely .Able and Powerful, they are not capable of fulfilling anyone's needs

They are too insignificant to deserve the soul's attention or the heart's humbleness. The same Powerful Being that has bestowed honor, dignity and riches upon them is capable of bestowing these on anybody. In fact, it is a matter of shame that man should submit so much to dishonor and indignity for the sake of his belly and his lusts as to accept the favor of an insignificant, impoverished, powerless and lowly creature devoid of wisdom and vision. If at all you should seek anyone's favor, then seek the favor of the Absolutely Self-Sufficient, the Creator of the heavens and

the earth, for if you pay attention to His sacred Essence and make your heart humble in His presence, that will liberate you from both the worlds and emancipate you from (the servitude of creatures, as it has been said: (١)

العُبُودِيَّةُ جَوْهَرَةٌ كُنْهُهَا الرُّبُوبِيَّةُ.

That is, the inner, invaluable essence of servitude to God is freedom and lordship. Thus servitude to God, attention to the unique focus of all being, and subjugation of all powers and dominations to the Sovereignty of God create such a state in the devotee's heart that he comes to wield power and kingdom over all the worlds. His spirit rises to such heights of sublimity that he does not pay obeisance to anyone except the Sacred Divine Essence, and even if, accidentally, he should be under the domination and power of anyone, that does not shake his heart, which preserves its independence and freedom, as in the case of Joseph (A) and Luqman (A) whose apparent subservience and servitude did not harm their free and freedom-seeking .character

And there may be many a powerful despot and king, who having no trace of inner freedom, dignity and honor in their character, are base servants and obedient slaves .of lust and carnal desire and who obsequiously ingratiate themselves to creatures

:Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) is reported to have said in the course of a discourse

إنِّى لأَنَفُ أنْ أَطْلُبَ الدُّنْيا مِنْ خالِقِها، فَكَيْفَ مِنْ مَخْلُوقٍ مِثْلِى.

I am ashamed to ask anything of worldly things from their Creator, so how

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.Misbah al-Shariah, bab ۱۰۰ -۱

(can I seek them from creatures like myself?(۱

My dear, if you are not ashamed of seeking the world, at least don't ask for it of weak creatures like yourself. Do understand that creatures have no power to do anyone any worldly good. I admit that you might have succeeded in attracting someone's attention through a thousand indignity and cajolery, but his will has no effect in the kingdom of God and no one has any role in the dominion of the King of kings.

Hence do not degrade yourself so much by flattering insignificant creatures for the sake of a passing world and for passing and paltry desires. Don't forget your Lord and preserve your freedom. Remove the shackles of servitude and captivity and never forget Him under any circumstance, for, as stated in the noble tradition:

إنَّ الحُرَّ حُرٌّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ أحْوَالِهِ.

The freeman is free in all circumstances.

Let it be known to you that contentment comes from the heart and the absence of neediness is a spiritual state, unrelated to external matters that lie outside the human self. I have myself seen certain persons amongst rich and wealthy classes who say thins which no honorable poor man would say and whose statements are shameful. The hearts of those wretches were covered by the dusts of dishonor and destitution.

The Jews, who, in proportion to their number, are the richest and wealthiest of all people on the earth, have faces that manifest debasement, poverty, indigence, beggarliness, hunger and wretchedness. They spend

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۱- Ilal al-Shari'ah, i, ۱۶۵; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, x, ۲۹.

all their lives in hardship, indignity, destitution and squalor. This is nothing but their .inner poverty and spiritual abasement

I have seen amongst pious and darvish-like persons some individuals whose hearts are so magnanimously free of want and need that they look at the entire world with indifference and consider none except the Sacred Essence of God Almighty as deserving of making a request. You too study carefully the conditions of worldly and ambitious people and you will find that their lack of self-respect and their degradation in flattering others is greater than that of others and their obsequiousness in front of .people is greater

Those (pseudo mystic masters) who are in pursuit of disciples and claim to guide others, suffer indignities and put up with degrading flattery and ingratiation for some day's satisfaction of their carnal lusts. The heart of the seeker of disciples and adherents is humbler in front of the disciple than that of the latter in front of him. This is because of the difference in the character of their respect for one another. While the disciple's humbleness and affection is of a spiritual and godly character, the :master's affection has a mundane and satanic character

These that have been mentioned are the worldly forms of these evils and indignities. But were the curtains to rise, the real spiritual forms of these servitudes, bondages and chains of carnal lusts and desires will reveal themselves. Perhaps the seventy-cubit chain, of which God Almighty has informed us, a chain with

which we shall be shackled and bound in that world, is the Hereafterly form of this very servitude and subjugation to the domination of Passion and Anger. And God :Almighty declares

(وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا.)

(And they shall find all they wrought present. (۱۸:۴۹

:And He also says

(لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ.)

God charges no soul save to its capacity;) standing to its account is what it has) (earned, and against its account what it has merited.(۲:۲۸۶

.That is, that which we obtain in the other world is a form of our own deeds

Therefore, break away the lengthy chains of lust and desire. Remove the locks that bar the heart's entrance and set yourself free from bondage. Live like a free human being in this world so that you may be free in the other world; otherwise, you will encounter there the intolerable Hereafterly form of this bondage. The hearts of the saints of God, despite their absolute and total freedom from bondage, were so much dreadful of the final outcome and so much full of lamentations that it amazes all .minds

I am aware that the matters mentioned in these pages are of a common and repetitive character. However, there is nothing wrong in such repetition, for constant reminding of the self and repetition of the truth is a desirable thing. This is why repetition has been considered desirable in prayers, supplications, worship and rituals. The main purpose is to accustom the self by means

.of repetitive exercises

My dear, don't be deluded; understand that as long as man remains in the bondage of the carnal self and its desires and as long as the lengthy chains of Passion and Anger are around his neck, he cannot attain to any of the spiritual stations; the inward authority of the soul and the domination of its higher will shall not manifest itself. Also, the station of spiritual independence and dignity, which is one of the highest of spiritual stations, shall not be realized. Rather, this bondage and slavery restrains man from revolting against the authority of the carnal self. And when the authority of the carnal self and Satan becomes consolidated in the inward realm and all the faculties of the self become their obedient slaves, becoming submissive and humble .in front of them, they do not remain satisfied with mere sins

Little by little, they draw man from minor to major sins and from there to weakening of beliefs, from there to darkening of the intellect, from there to the constricted path of denial and contestation (of the truth), and from there to the hostility and enmity of the prophets and the awliya'. Throughout these stages, the self, which is their slave and under their domination, cannot disobey them. At last this obedience and captivity .becomes so severe that it may take man to the most dangerous point

Hence, the intelligent man with sympathy for himself must try by all means to liberate ,himself from this slavery

and as long as there is opportunity and his powers are intact and his life, health and youth are there and his faculties have not been totally subjugated (by Satan and the carnal self), he must rise to undertake this task. For some time he must exercise vigilance over himself, study his own inner states, reflect about the conditions of those who have passed away and faced an evil fate, and make his heart understand the passing character of worldly life. He must awaken his heart and inform it of the truth narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) who said:

الدُّنْيا مَزْرَعَهُ الآخِرَه.

(The world is the farm of the Hereafter.(۱)

That is, if we do not sow the seeds of righteous deeds in the few days of our life here, the opportunity will be lost for ever. When we reach the threshold of the other world and death seizes us, deeds come to an end., hopes are extinguished. If, God forbid, we continue to remain in the slavery of lusts and the captivity of various carnal desires until the Angel of Death arrives, it is possible that Satan may achieve his ultimate objective of wresting away our faith. He may treat us in such a fashion and metamorphose our hearts to such an extent that we may depart from the world as enemies of God and His prophets and awliya'. If that happens, God knows what calamities, what darkness and what terrors await us.

So, O base self! O negligent heart! Awake from

۱- Ihya' al-ulum, iv, ۱۴.

thy sleep and arise to confront this enemy who for years has subdued you and made a captive of you, who drags you whenever he wants and commands you to perform every ugly and destructive deed! Arise and break these bonds! Sever these chains! Seek thy freedom and throw away this disgrace and indignity. Wear the girdle of servitude to God, the Almighty and the Glorious, that you may be free from every kind of servitude and slavery, that you may attain to the absolute kingdom of God in both the worlds.

My dear, although this world - being the believer's prison - is not the abode of Divine award and the place of the manifestation of God's kingdom, but should you come out from the captivity of the carnal self and submit to the servitude of God, make your heart a true monotheist and clear the dusts of plurality from the mirror of the spirit, and turn your heart's attention to the focal point of Absolute Perfection, you will witness its effects in this world itself and your heart will attain such an expanse that it will become the realm of the manifestation of God's total sovereignty, thus becoming greater than all the worlds. Hence He has said:

لا تَسَعُنِی أَرْضِی وَلا سَمَائِی، بَلْ یَسَعُنِی قَلْبُ عَبْدِیَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.

Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me.

Indeed it is the heart of the man of faith which can contain Me.(۱)

Such richness and contentment will then pervade

۱- Ghwali al-lia'ili, iv, ۷.

your heart that all the outward and inward realms will become worthless in your eyes and your will, will become so mighty that it shall not attach itself to the corporeal and .the celestial realms; rather it will not even consider them worthy of itself

طیران مرغ دیدی توزپای بند شهوت درآی تا ببینی طیران آدمیت

;You have watched the bird’s flight

,But should you remove the shackles of lust

.You will witness the flight of man

Sabr, The Outcome Of Freedom From Lust

One of the great results and precious fruits of this freedom and emancipation from servitude to the carnal self is patience in calamities and misfortunes. Now it remains for us to explain briefly the meaning of sabr, the kinds of its fruits and its relation to .freedom

As defined by the researcher of the righteous sect, the explorer of the subtleties of the confirmed creed, the perfect in knowledge and deed, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (Q)(۱) sabr means restraining the self from agitation when confronted with undesirables. And the famous, confirmed ‘arif (Khwajah ‘Abd Allah al-’Ansari), says in Manazil al-:sa’irin

صبر، نگاهداری نفس است از شکایت بر جزع مستور.

.Sabr means restraining the self from complaint about hidden anguish

And let it be known to you that sabr has been considered as one of the stations of those in the middle group (mutawassitun), for as long as the self regards misfortunes and calamities as detestable and feels inward anguish on their account, its marifah is deficient. Thus the station of rida in regard to Divine destiny and satisfaction at the turning up of

١ - For maintaining readability, (Q) which is an acronym for “Quddisa sirruh” is used throughout the book to denote “May God sanctify his/their soul(s).” It is used for the deceased ulama, urafa, and awliya.

misfortunes represents a higher station, although we consider this also to be one of the stations pertaining to the mutawassitun. So also sabr in regard to abstinence from sins and in regard to fulfillment of duties (ta'at) is also related to deficient knowledge .of the secrets of ibadat and the Hereafterly forms of sin and obedience

For if one were to understand the reality of ibadah and to believe in the purgatorial forms of worships and sins, sabr in regard to these has no meaning for him. Rather, the contrary becomes true here, and if a joy or comfort causes him to neglect worship or commit a sin, they (such joys and comforts) become detestable for him and his inward anguish becomes greater than that of those who bear misfortunes and .calamities patiently

The righteous servant and the knower of the duties of servitude, the possessor of noble stations and miraculous characteristics, 'Ali ibn 'Tawus (Q) is narrated to celebrate the first day of his becoming mukallaf. He gave feasts and festivated in commemoration of that day, for God, the Blessed and the Supreme, had blessed him with the permission to perform duties on that day. Can anyone say that that sublime spirit exercised sabr in regard to worship and duties considering them as inwardly ?unwelcome

What a difference between us and those obedient servants of God! We think that God Almighty has burdened us with duties; we consider them troublesome and view them as a botheration. If one of us

attempts to offer his prayer at the outset of its time, he says that it is better to be done with it and the sooner one relieves oneself the better! All our misfortunes are .due to ignorance and foolishness and on account of the lack or absence of faith

In any case, sabr is concealed anguish. And that which has been said about the great prophets and the Righteous Imams - who have been characterized with sabr - that could mean forbearance in regard to physical sufferings, which are painful as a matter of human nature; or it could mean sabr in regard to separation from the Beloved, which is one of the great stations of the lovers --and to this we shall return later. Otherwise, sabr in regard to obedience or misfortune or sin is not only .(inapplicable in regard to them but also in regard to their followers (shi'ah

:The famous 'arif 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani, in Sharh Manazil al sa'irin, says

The intent of the Shaykh, when he says that sabr means abstinence from complaint, is complaining to creatures. Otherwise, complaining to God Almighty and beseeching :Him for relief is not opposed to sabr. Hadrat Ayyub complained to God and said

(أَنِّی مَسَّنِی الشَّیْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ.)

(Behold, Satan has visited me with weariness and chastisement. (۳۸:۴۱

:And God yet praises him, saying

(إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ.)

Surely We found him. a steadfast man. How excellent a servant he was! He was (penitent. (۳۸:۴۴

:And Hadrat Ya'qub (Jacob) said

(إِنَّمَا أَشْکُو بَثِّی وَحُزْنِی إِلَی اللَّهِ.)

I make

(complaint of my anguish and my sorrow unto God, (۱۲:۸۶

Although he was one of the forbearing. Rather, to quit complaining to God is a .manifestation of the hardening (of the heart) and a sign of grudgefulness

The accounts of the lives of the great prophets and the Infallible Imams - upon all of whom be God's benedictions- reveal that although their stations were over and above the stations of sabr, rida and taslim (surrender), they never stopped supplicating lamenting and confessing their impotence before the Worshipped One. They expressed their needs to God Almighty and this is not contrary to their spiritual .stations

Rather, remembering God, cherishing the intimacy of solitude with the Beloved, and expression of servitude and humility in front of His absolute perfection and greatness is the ultimate end of the hopes of the mystics ('arifun) and the final destination of the .(journey of the wayfarers (salikun

Results Of Sabr

You should know that sabr produces many results, among which is the soul's training and discipline. If a human being bears patiently with misfortunes and calamities for some time, if he seriously endures the hardships entailed by worship and rites and the bitterness arising from the renunciation of carnal pleasures, and if he does all this for the sake of obedience to his Lord and Provider, his soul gradually becomes accustomed to these things. Then it becomes disciplined and docile and relinquishes its earlier recalcitrance. To bear with hardships and difficulties becomes an easy thing for it. There develops within it an

enduring luminous faculty through which he can rise over the station of sabr to reach .other higher spiritual stations

Sabr in regard to sins is the source of the self's taqwa. Sabr in regard to obedience (ta'at) is the source of intimacy with God. And sabr in misfortunes is the source of rids or contentment with Divine destiny and decrees. These are the stations of the faithful (ahl al- iman) or rather those of the gnostics (ahl al-'irfan). In the noble traditions of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt we find forceful emphasis on sabr. The following is a tradition :of Imam al-Sadiq (A) from the noble al-Kafi, in which the Imam says

الصَّبْرُ مِنَ الإيمَانِ بِمَنْزِلَهِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الجَسَدِ، فَإذَا ذَهَبَ الرَّأْسُ ذَهَبَ الجَسَدُ، كَذَلِكَ إذَا ذَهَبَ الصَّبْرُ ذَهَبَ الإيمَانُ.

Verily, sabr is to faith what the head is to the body. The body perishes without the (head, and so also when sabr goes faith also disappears?(١

In another tradition whose isnad reaches Imam al-Sajjad (A), he is reported to have :stated

الصَّبْرُ مِنَ الإيمَانِ بِمَنْزِلَهِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الجَسَدِ، وَلا إيمَانَ لِمَنْ لا صَبْرَ لَهُ.

Verily, sabr is to faith what the head is to the body: one who has no sabr has no (faith.(٢

There are many traditions relating to this topic and we will mention some of them .later in relevance with the context

Sabr is the key to the gates of felicity and the main means of deliverance from mortal perils. Sabr makes man bear calamities with ease and face difficulties with composure. It strengthens the

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.Usul al-Kafi, ii, bab al-sabr, ۱۲۸, hadith No. ۲ -۱

.Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ۳ -۲

will and the power of resolution. It brings independence to the dominion of the soul. Anguish and anxiety on the other hand, aside from their shameful character, are symptoms of the soul's weakness. They deprive one's being of its stability, weaken the determination, and enfeeble the intellect. The informed researcher Khwajah :Naqir al-Din al-Tusi (Q) states

وَهُوَ – أىْ الصَّبْرَ – يَمْنَعُ البَاطِنَ عَنِ الإضْطِرَابِ وَاللِّسَانَ عَنِ الشِّكَايَهِ وَالأعْضَاءَ عَنِ الحَرَكَاتِ غَيْرِ المُعْتَادَهِ.

Sabr restrains the inner being from anguish, the tongue from complaint and the bodily .members from untoward movements

On the contrary, the inward being of the impatient person is full of anxiety and alarm. His heart is full of tremors and shaky, and this. is itself the greatest calamity that can befall a human being and deprive him of peace. But sabr diminishes misfortune and makes the heart overcome hardship and assists the will to overpower calamities. In the same way, the impatient person complains of his troubles to everyone, and this, aside from causing disrepute among people who look down upon him as a weakling of instable character, makes him lose his standing in the court of the Holy Lord and in .front of His angels

What faith in God and what surrender to the Holy Lord has the servant who cannot bear an adversity that visits him from his Beloved, the Absolute, after having received thousands upon thousands of His bounties and while being immersed in the sea of His favor, and opens his mouth in front of

people to complain as soon as an adversity strikes him? So it is right if it is said that .one who has no sabr has no faith

If you have faith in your Lord and believe all the affairs to lie in His mighty hands, if you believe none else to have any say in the matters, of course you will not complain of the hardships of life and the adversities that strike you before God Almighty. Rather .you will accept them willingly and thank Him gratefully for His bounties

Hence that inner agitation, those plaintive utterances, those unbecoming bodily movements – all these bear testimony to our lack of faith. As long as we find ourselves amid favors, we are grateful, with a gratefulness that is formal and lacking inner substance, a gratefulness that is offered in greed of further favors. However, when a tragedy occurs or a pain or disease strikes us, we take our complaints against the Blessed and the Almighty Lord in front of the creatures. With a plaintive tongue and a tone brimming with taunts and cynicism, we complain about Him to all and sundry. Gradually those complaints, anxieties and misgivings sow the seeds of hostility towards God and His decrees inside the self. Slowly they sprout and grow, making the .once passing feeling into an enduring trait

Thereupon, God forbid, the form of one's inward being assumes the form of enmity towards God and His ordainments. When that happens, things go out of one's control

and one is no longer able to check his thoughts and feelings. His inward and outward being becomes colored with the hostility towards God Almighty, and he departs from this world to face eternal wretchedness and gloom, with a spirit infused with the enmity and hatred of the Lord of Bounties. I seek refuge in God from the evil of a disastrous end and from a provisional faith (iman mustawda'). Hence it has been truly .said that when sabr goes faith also departs

And so, my dear, the matter is of great importance and the road is full of perils. Muster all the strength at your command and be patient and forbearing throughout the ups and downs of life. With manly courage stand against adversities and calamities. Make your self understand that agitation and anguish, aside from involving a great shame by themselves, are futile in confrontation with sufferings and calamities. No purpose is served by complaining about the irresistible decrees and inevitable ordainments of God in front of weak and powerless creatures, as pointed out by the following noble :tradition from al-Kafi

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ سُمَاعَةَ بْنِ مَهْرَانَ، عَنْ أَبِى الحَسَنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ لِى: مَا حَبَسَكَ عَنِ الحَجِّ؟ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، وَقَعَ عَلَىَّ دَيْنٌ كَثِيرٌ وَذَهَبَ مَالِى، وَدَيْنِى الَّذِى قَدْ لَزِمَنِى هُوَ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ ذَهَابِ مَالِى. فَلَوْلا أَنَّ رَجُلاً مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا أَخْرَجَنِى مَا قَدَرْتُ أَنْ أَخْرُجَ. فَقَالَ لِى: إِنْ تَصْبِرْ تُغْتَبَطْ وَإِنْ لا تَصْبِرْ يُنْفِذِ اللهُ مَقَادِيرَهُ رَاضِياً كُنْتَ أَمْ كَارِهاً.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni reports with

his chain of transmitters from Sama'ah ibn Mihran from Imam al-Kazim (A) that the Imam said to him, "What stopped you from going for hajj?" Sama'ah says that he replied, "May I be your ransom, a big debt has fallen upon me and I have lost my property. However, the debt that lies upon me weighed more heavily upon me than the loss of property. Had it not been for one of our companions, I could not have come out of it." The Imam said, "If you are patient, you will be the object of envy, and if you don't God will enforce His decrees regardless of your pleasure or displeasure."(١)

Thus we know that anxiety and anguish are not only futile, they are capable of inflicting terrible injuries and are followed by fatal consequences destructive to faith. On the other hand, sabr, forbearance and restraint bring fair, plentiful rewards and have sublime and beautiful forms in the world of Barzakh. This is stated at the end of the noble tradition expounded by us:

وَكَذلِكَ الصَّبْرُ يُعَقِّبُ خَيْراً.فَاصْبِرُوا وَوَطِّنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ عَلى الصَّبْرِ تُؤْجَرُوا.

Thus the ultimate result of qabr is good in this world - as known from the example of Hadrat Yusuf (A) - and it is the cause of reward in the Hereafter. In another noble tradition of al-Kafi, whose sanad goes up to Abu Hamzah al-Thumali (M)Imam al-Sadiq (A) is reported to have said:

قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: مَنِ ابْتُلِيَ مِنَ المُؤْمِنِينَ بِبَلاءٍ فَصَبَرَ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ

١- Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ١٠.

أَلْفِ شَهِيدٍ.

Abu Hamzah says: Abu Abd Allah said: “Whoever of the believers that bears patiently with a tribulation that befalls him, has the reward of a thousand martyrs.”(١)

There are many traditions relating to this subject and we will mention some of them in the following section. However, as to that which was said above that sabr has a beautiful purgatorial form, this is mentioned - apart from the demonstrative proofs confirming it - in the following tradition of the noble al-Kafi from Imam al-Sadiq (A):

قَالَ: إذَا دَخَلَ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِى قَبْرِهِ، كَانَتِ الصَّلاةُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَالزَّكَاهُ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ وَالبِرُّ مُظِلٌّ عَلَيْهِ. وَيَتَنَحَّى الصَّبْرُ نَاحِيَةً، فَإذَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ المَلَكَانِ اللَّذَانِ يَلِيَانِ مَسَاءَلَتَهُ قَالَ الصَّبْرُ لِلصَّلاهِ وَالزَّكَاه وَالبِرِّ: دُونَكُمْ صَاحِبَكُمْ، فَإنْ عَجِزْتُمْ عَنْهُ فَأنَا دُونَهُ.

The Imam (A) said, “When the believer enters his grave, salat is on his right hand, zakat on his left, virtue faces him, with sabr taking him under its shelter. When the two angels in charge of questioning enter upon him, sabr says to salat, zakat and virtue: Take care of your companion, and if you fail to assist him I will take care of him myself.”(٢)

The Degrees And Levels Of Sabr

Let it be known to you that, as indicated by the noble traditions, there are various degrees and levels of sabr, and its reward and merit vary in accordance with its degree and level. This is revealed by the following tradition of the noble al-Kafi narrated by the Master of the God-fearing, Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (A) from the Holy Prophet (S):

قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ

١- Usul al-Kafi. hadith No. ١٧.

٢- Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ٨.

اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الصَّبْرُ ثَلاثَةٌ: صَبْرٌ عِنْدَ المُصِيبَهِ وَصَبْرٌ عَلَى الطَّاعَهِ وَصَبْرٌ عَنِ المَعْصِيَهِ. فَمَنْ صَبَرَ عَلَى المُصِيبَهِ حَتَّى يَرُدَّهَا بِحُسْنِ عَزَائِهَا كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ ثَلاثَمِائَهِ دَرَجَهٍ: مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَهِ إِلَى الدَّرَجَهِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الأَرْضِ. وَمَنْ صَبَرَ عَلَى الطَّاعَهِ كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ سِتَّمِائَهِ دَرَجَهٍ مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَهِ إِلَى الدَّرَجَهِ كَمَا بَيْنَ تُخُومِ الأَرْضِ إِلَى العَرْشِ. وَمَنْ صَبَرَ عَنِ المَعْصِيَهِ كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ تِسْعَمِائَهِ دَرَجَهٍ مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَهِ إِلَى الدَّرَجَهِ كَمَا بَيْنَ تُخُومِ الأَرْضِ إِلَى مُنْتَهَى العَرْشِ.

Ali (A) said: The Messenger of Allah said: “Sabr Is of three kinds: sabr at the time of‘ affliction, sabr in regard to obedience, and sabr in regard to disobedience. One who bears patiently with affliction, resisting it with a fair consolation, God writes for him three hundred degrees (of sublimity), the elevation of one degree over another being like the distance between earth and heavens. And one who is patient in regard to obedience, God writes for him six hundred degrees (of sublimity), the elevation of one degree over another being like the distance between the earth’s depths and the Throne (al-’arsh). And one who is patient in regard to disobedience, God writes for him nine hundred degrees (of sublimity), the elevation of one degree over another being like the distance between the earth’s depths and the furthest frontiers of the (Throne.”(١

This noble tradition reveals that sabr in regard to disobedience is superior to the other levels of sabr, for it not only possesses greater number of degrees but also

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.Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ۱۵ -۱

the range between its degrees is greater than those of the other kinds. It also shows that the extent of Paradise is much greater than what can come into our imagination, for our vision is limited and confined. That which has been said as a description of :Paradise that

(وَجَنَّهٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(And a Garden the breadth whereof is as the breadth of heaven and earth. (۵۷:۲۱

The Verse) perhaps refers to the Paradise of deeds. That which has been referred to) here in this noble tradition is the Paradise of character and the criterion in the Paradise of character is the strength and perfection of will. Hence its extent should not be confined within any limits. Some have stated that that which has been meant here is height. That is, it is possibly equal in breadth (to the Paradise of deeds) and different in height. But this appears to be remote, for evidently 'breadth' here refers to extent not to breadth as opposed to length, for 'breadth' in reference to heaven and earth also has no meaning when taken in the ordinary sense of something opposed to length, although they do have 'breadth' in the sense of a 'second dimension' in the terminology of natural philosophers. The Book of God, however, .does not speak in accordance with any specific terminology

The noble al-Kafi records the following tradition of the Prophet (S) with a chain of :(narration reaching Imam al-Sadiq (A

قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: سَيَأْتِی عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ

p: ۴۶۸

لا- يُنَالُ المُلْكَ فِيهِ إلا بِالقَتْلِ وَالتَّجَبُّرِ، وَلا الغِنَى إلا بِالغَصْبِ وَالبُخْلِ، وَلا المَحَبَّهِ إلا بِاسْتِخْرَاجِ الدِّينِ وَاتِّبَاعِ الهَوَى. فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانَ فَصَبَرَ عَلَى الفَقْرِ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى الغِنَى وَصَبَرَ عَلَى البُغْضِهِ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى المَحَبَّهِ وَصَبَرَ عَلَى الذُّلِّ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى العِزِّ آتَاهُ اللهُ ثَوَابَ خَمْسِينَ صِدِّيقاً مِمَّنْ صَدَّقَ بِي.

The Imam (A) said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "A time will come upon the people wherein political authority will not be attainable without bloodshed and tyranny, nor wealth without usurpation and stinginess, nor affection without discarding religion and pursuing lust and desire. Whoever lives in such times and bears patiently with poverty despite possessing the capacity to become rich (illegitimately), and bears up with hostility despite being capable of acquiring favor and affection, and bears with humiliation despite possessing the capacity to acquire honor, God will give him the (reward of fifty truthful ones, of those who confirmed me."(١)

Something close to this has been said in another tradition from Amir al Mu'minin (A) and there are many traditions relating to this theme. The few which have been quoted .here are sufficient for our purpose

:The 'Urafa's Degrees Of Sabr

Let it be known to you that that which has been said hitherto relates to the condition of ordinary people and the mutawassitun. We stated at the beginning of this exposition that sabr has been considered as something pertaining to the stations of the mutawassitun. But Sabr hays other levels which belong to the wayfarers of the path of perfection and the awliya'. One

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١- Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ١٢.

of such levels of sabr is sabr fi Allah (Sabr in God), and it means steadfastness (thabat) in spiritual endeavor (mujahadah) and abstinence from objects of love and attraction. .Rather it means the renunciation of selfhood in the path of the Beloved

This stage belongs to the wayfarers (ahl al-suluk). Another level is that of sabr ma'a Allah (sabr with God). It belongs to those blessed with the Presence and the Beatific vision, which comes at the time of exit from the garment of manhood, and freedom from the curtains of deeds and attributes, and irradiation upon the heart of the lights of the Names and Attributes, and entry into the state of intimacy and awe and safeguarding of the self against changing from color to color and absence from the .station of intimacy and vision

Another level is that of sabr 'an Allah (sabr from God) which pertains to the stations of lovers of God and piners for Him, of those blessed with epiphany (ahl al-shuhud wa al-'ayan) at the time of returning to their own world, the world of plurality and sobriety (after intoxication with God). This is the hardest and the most difficult of the stations, and to it has referred the Master of the Wayfarers, the Commander of the Faithful, and the Leader of the Perfect (i.e. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) in the noble Du'a' :Kumayl

فَهَبْنِی، یَا إِلَهِی وَسَیِّدِی وَمَوْلایَ، صَبَرْتُ عَلَی عَذَابِکَ، فَکَیْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَی فِرَاقِکَ.

O my God, my Master and my Lord! Even if

?I were able to endure Thy chastisement, how shall I bear Thy separation

:The following is narrated about al-Shibli

وَرُوِیَ أنَّ شَابّاً مِنَ المُحِبِّینَ سَأَلَ الشِّبْلِیَّ عَنِ الصَّبْرِ فَقَالَ: أَیُّ الصَّبْرِ أَشَدُّ؟ فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ لِلهِ. فَقَالَ: لا ـ فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ بِاللهِ. فَقَالَ: لا. فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ عَلَی اللهِ. فَقَالَ: لا. فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ فِی اللهِ. فَقَالَ: لا. فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ مَعَ اللهِ. فَقَالَ: لا. فَقَالَ: وَیْحَکَ فَأَیُّ؟ فَقَالَ: الصَّبْرُ عَنِ اللهِ. فَشَهِقَ الشِّبْلِیُّ وَخَرَّ مَغْشِیّاً عَلَیْهِ.

It is narrated that a youth from among the Lovers questioned al-Shibli about sabr. “Which kind of sabr is the hardest?” He asked. “The sabr for God,” replied al-Shibli. “No,” said the youth. “The sabr by God,” answered al-Shibli. “No,” said the youth. “The sabr over God,” said al-Shibli. “No,” said the youth again. “The sabr in God,” said al-Shibli. “No,” came the answer. “The sabr with God?” said al Shibii, and the youth said “No,” again. “Woe to you, which one is it?” said al-Shibli, exasperated. “The sabr from God,” came the answer. Al-Shibli gave a cry and swooned.(۱)

Another level is that of sabr bi Allah, which is for those blessed with stability and steadfastness, which is attained after the state of sobriety and endurance with God (baqa’ bi Allah) and after moulding oneself in accordance with Divine norms (takhalluq bi akhlaq Allah). It is something attained by none except the perfect, and since we have nothing to partake of those stations, to elaborate further about these matters is .not appropriate for these pages

And Praise is God’s at the

۱- Sharh Manazil al-sa’irin, bab al-sabr, ۸۸. No.۲۸.

beginning and the end, and may God's benedictions be upon Muhammad and, his .immaculate Progeny

(Seventeenth Hadith: Repentance (Tawbah

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلی الإمَامِ الأَقْدَمِ حُجَّهِ الفِرْقَهِ وَرَئِیسِ الأُمَّهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ الکُلَیْنِیِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَحْیَی، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِیسَی، عَنِ الحَسَنِ بْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ، عَنْ مُعَاوِیَهَ بْنِ وَهَبٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: إذَا تَابَ العَبْدُ تَوْبَهً نَصُوحاً أَحَبَّهُ اللهُ فَسَتَرَ عَلَیْهِ فِی الدُّنْیَا وَالآخِرَه. فَقُلْتُ: وَکَیْفَ یَسْتُرُ عَلَیْهِ؟ قَالَ: یُنْسِی مَلَکَیْهِ مَا کَتَبَا عَلَیْهِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ وَیُوحِی إلی جَوَارِحِهِ: إکْتُمِی عَلَیْهِ ذُنُوبَهُ وَیُوحِی إلی بِقَاعِ الأَرْضِ اکْتُمِی مَا کَانَ یَعْمَلُ عَلَیْکِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ. فَیَلْقَی اللهَ حِینَ یَلْقَاهُ وَلَیْسَ شَیْءٌ یَشْهَدُ عَلَیْهِ بِشَیْءٍ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ.

With a continuous chain of transmission reaching the pioneering leader, a proof of the sect and a chief of the ummah, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from, al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab, who said, "I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) says: 'When a servant turns to God with sincere repentance (tawbatan nasuhan), God loves him and covers him (i.e. his sins) in the world and the Hereafter.' I said, 'And how does He cover him? 'The Imam (A) replied, "He makes the two angels (assigned to write his deeds) forget that which they have written of his sins. Then He inspires his bodily members (saying), "Do conceal his sins," and He inspires the earth's places (saying), "Conceal the sins that he used to commit over you." Then he meets God, at

the time that he meets Him, in such a manner that there is nothing to give witness against him regarding any sin."(١)

Exposition

Know that tawbah (repentance) is one of the important as well as difficult stages, which signifies the return from (physical) nature (tabi'ah) to the soul's spirituality after that the light of (primordial) human nature (fitrah) and the spirit has been blinded by the darkness of carnal nature through sins and disobedience. To explain, the soul in its initial natural state (fitrah) is devoid of any kind of excellence, beauty, light or delight, in the same way as it is free from their opposites. It is like a blank tablet absolutely without any inscription.

Neither it possesses any spiritual merits nor any vices. But there has been planted in it the sparks of capacity and capability to attain any kind of station. Its nature (fitrah) is straight and its essence carries intrinsic luminosity. But commission of sins causes obscurity within the heart and this obfuscation increases with the number of sins until it becomes totally darkened. The light of intrinsic nature is extinguished and changed into abiding wretchedness. But between these two states, before the onset of total darkness over the heart's tablet, if it awakes from its slumber of negligence, this state of awakening is followed by that of repentance.

The benefit arising from this state - with the conditions to be mentioned, God willing, in the following pages - becomes complete and the soul returns from the darkness

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١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr, bab al-tawbah, hadith No. ١.

and obscurity of carnal nature to the light of original nature and its essential spirituality. In other words, it becomes again like a tablet devoid of virtues and vices., :as mentioned in the famous hadith

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لا ذَنْبَ لَهُ.

(One who repents from sin is like one who has not sinned.(١)

This shows that tawbah in reality is a return from the domain of physical nature (tabi'ah) and its laws to the domain of spirituality and primordial nature (fitrah). Similarly, the reality of inabah is return from fitrah and spirituality to God and setting out and migrating from the soul's habitat to its ultimate destination. Hence the station of tawbah is prior to that of inabah and an elaboration of this point is not proper for .these pages

Tawbah And Postponement

An important point whose awareness is necessary for the wayfarer of the path of guidance and salvation is that success in a complete and sound repentance, meeting all its conditions (to be mentioned), is a difficult thing and rarely attainable. The indulgence in sin, especially the major and mortal ones, causes man to become totally forgetful of tawbah. If the tree of sinfulness growing in the orchard of the human heart reaches maturity and fruition, its roots becoming strong, the results are .calamitous, one of which is to turn away man totally from repentance

Even if once in a while it comes to his mind, he keeps on postponing it from day to day and from one month to another, telling himself, "I

.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, hadith No. ١٠ -١

will make a sound repentance at the end of my life and in old age," forgetting that this :is a Divine stratagem

(وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ.)

(And God is the best of devisers. (۳:۵۴

Don't imagine that man can perform tawbah after the strengthening of the roots of sinfulness or meet its conditions. Therefore, the springtime for tawbah is the time of- youth when the sins are fewer, the inner darkness of the heart incomplete, the .conditions of tawbah easier, and their fulfillment less difficult

Moreover, man's greed is greater in old age and so also are his love of wealth,. ambition and his hopes. This is proved by experience and borne out by the Prophet's noble tradition. Even if it be admitted that man can succeed in performing tawbah in old age, there is no certainty of reaching old age and-of not meeting one's death in youth in the condition of habitual disobedience. The relative fewness of old people is also an indication of the fact that death is closer to the young. In a city of fifty .thousand we do not see more than fifty octogenarians

Therefore, my dear, beware of Satan's guiles and abstain from playing tricks with your Lord by telling yourself: "I will lead a life of lust for some fifty years or more, and .will make amends for the past by asking His pardon." This is wishful thinking

If you have heard or read in a tradition that God Almighty has favored this ummah and accepts the repentance of its members

until before the appearance of death or its signs, that is true. But alas, that is the time when the opportunity of tawbah is taken away from man. Do you think that tawbah is a mere verbal exercise? No, such is not the case; the performance of-tawbah requires effort and hardship. The return, as well as the determination to return, .requires practical effort as well as the exercise of knowledge

Otherwise it rarely happens for a man, either to think of tawbah or to succeed in performing it, or to fulfill the conditions of its validity and acceptance, or the conditions of its perfection. And it often happens that death grants no respite for the thought of tawbah to occur, or for tawbah to materialize, as one is transferred from this habitat with the burden of weighty sins and their endless darkness. Then, only God knows .what 'misfortunes and calamities befall him

Even if it be assumed that one is ultimately destined to salvation and felicity in the Hereafter, the atonement of sins is not an easy task in that world. It entails terrible squeezes, hardships and burnings before one becomes worthy of the intercession (of .the intercessors) and the mercy of the Most Merciful

So, my dear, make up your mind as soon as possible and make firm your resolution and will. Repent from your sins so long as you are young and alive in this world. Don't let this God-given opportunity to slip away. Don't pay attention to satanic enticements

.and the tricks of the carnal self

An Important Point

Here it is also necessary to pay attention to another important point. The person who repents cannot completely recover that inward spiritual purity and that intellectual illumination (of those who abstain from sin) even after tawbah. Because a sheet of paper does not regain its former whiteness after being blackened and then cleaned with an eraser. It is difficult for a broken pot when repaired to recover its former condition. Great is the difference between a lifelong faithful and sincere friend and the .friend who apologizes after betraying one

.Moreover, few are they who can correctly fulfill the duties of repentance

Hence man should try as much as possible not to enter sin and disobedience, for the correction of the soul after its corruption is a difficult task. And if, God forbid, should such an adversity occur, one should try to take a curative step as soon as possible, for .a slight damage is sooner and better repaired

My dear, do not pass by this stage nonchalantly' and indifferently! Meditate and reflect over your condition and your ultimate end. Turn to the Book of God, the traditions of the Seal of Prophets and the Imams of guidance – upon all of whom be God's salutations – to the utterances of the ulama of the Ummah as well as to the dictates of your own intellect and conscience. Do open this door, which is the key to all other openings, and enter this house which, for us, is

.the main abode of humanity

Consider it important and attend to it with care. Implore God, the Exalted and the Blessed, to grant you success in finding your cherished goal. Seek help from the spiritual station of the Noble Messenger and the Imams of guidance - upon all of whom be peace - and seek refuge in the Wali al-'Amr, the Age's honor and its Leader (the Twelfth Imam), may God hasten his appearance. Of course, that holy personage .does assist the weak and the destitute and answer the call of the helpless

The Essentials Of Tawbah

Let it be known to you that there are certain essentials and requirements of a thorough repentance without whose materialization an authentic repentance is not .attained. We shall mention the main ones of these, which are essential

One of them, which is the most essential, is regret and remorse for one's past sins and faults. Another is resolving not to make a return to their commission ever. These two, in fact, constitute the essential reality of tawbah and comprise its essential constituents. The main thing in this respect is the attainment of this state and the realization of this reality, which should take place in such a manner that man recognizes the effect of sins on the soul and its consequences in the world of Barzakh and the Day of Resurrection, both by means of rational reflection as well as from .tradition

For it is a demonstrable truth for the urafa, which has also been mentioned in the traditions

of the Household of Inerrancy (A) that sins have reified forms in Barzakh and at the time of Resurrection which correspond with those sins. They are endowed with a life and will of their own in that world and torment men awaringly and willfully. In the same way, the fire of Hell also burns men awaringly and willfully. That is because that realm is the realm of total life.

Hence in that world we shall encounter forms which are the result of our evil or good deeds. This matter has been often mentioned, expressly or implicitly, in the Holy Qur'an and the noble traditions. It is also in accordance with the creed of the emanationist philosophers and the experience and discoveries of the mystics and 'urafa. Similarly, every sin has an effect upon the soul that has been called al-nuqtat al-sawda' (a black spot) in traditions. It is an obfuscation which appears in the heart and the soul and grows gradually. Ultimately, it may grow to completion and lead man to disbelief, apostasy and everlasting wretchedness, as explained earlier.

Hence the intelligent man when he becomes aware of this fact and pays as much heed to the statements of the prophets and awliya' as to the advice of a physician and doctor, he would certainly abstain from sin and distance himself from it. And if, God forbid, he commits any he would turn away loathfully in penitence and his heart would be filled with remorse. The result that this remorse produces is

something great and its effects are very beneficial. The determination to quit .disobedience and sin is a consequence of this remorse

If these two essential conditions are realized, the task of the wayfarer of the Hereafter becomes easier. God's graceful succor becomes his lot, and, in accordance :with the explicit meaning of the holy verse

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.)

(Verily God loves the repentant, (۲:۲۲۲

as well as the present noble tradition, he becomes the beloved of God if he is sincere .in his repentance

And man should strive in the sincerity of his repentance with practical and meditative exercises and contemplative effort, realizing that being beloved of God is something priceless, beyond all worth. Only God knows what spiritual resplendence and what flares of perfection make up the Hereafterly form of that love, and only God, the .Sublime and the Blessed, knows how He shall treat His beloved ones

O man! How sinful and foolish thou art not to know the worth of the bounties of thy Provider (wali al-ni'am). After having spent years in disobedience and after prolonged disloyalty to such a Lord, Who has provided all the means of your comfort and ease - without that being, na'udhu bi Allah, of any imaginable benefit to Him - having violated His sanctities and taken shamelessness and recalcitrance to their extreme, now that you are remorseful, penitent and repentant, God Almighty has taken you for His loved !one. What abundance of mercy and what plentitude of bounty is it

O God! We are incapable

of thanking You for Your bounties. Our tongues and those of all other beings are unable to praise You and extol You. All that we can do is to bow our heads in shame and to ask Your pardon for our shamelessness. What are we to deserve Your mercy? Yet Your mercy is more abundant and Your bounties are more inclusive than can be .described. Indeed

أَنْتَ کَمَا أَثْنَیْتَ عَلَی نَفْسِکَ.

(You are as You have praised Yourself.(۱

And man should endeavor to intensify the form of contrition and remorse in the heart so that God willing, it enters the burning chamber. That is, through meditation about the terrible consequences of sin, remorse becomes stronger in his heart, thereby :voluntarily kindling the holy fire, the fire of which the Qur'an says

(نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَهُ. الَّتِی تَطَّلِعُ عَلَی الْأَفْئِدَهِ.)

The fire of God kindled, roaring over the hearts covered down upon them, in columns (outstretched.(۲

In his heart, burning the heart in the fire of remorse to incinerate all its sins and to burn away all its rust and corrosion. He should know that were he not to kindle himself this fire in this world and were he not to open upon himself the door of this hell - which itself is the main gateway of Paradise - he would inevitably pass from this world into the other to face the terribly cauterizing fire prepared for him there. Thereupon the .doors of Hell shall be opened and the doors of Paradise closed to him

O God! Give

۱- Safinat al-Bihar, II, ۱۸۰.

۲- ۱۰۴:۶

us a breast lit with the fire of remorse. Set our hearts aflame with the worldly fire and set it afire by throwing into it the sparks of remorse. Remove the corrosion of our hearts and take us from this world in a state of freedom from the consequences of .sins. Verily Thou art the Lord of bounties and are powerful over everything

The Conditions Of Tawbah

That which was mentioned in the section above were the essential requirements of tawbah. There are certain conditions for its acceptance, as well as for its perfection, .that we shall mention below

The main conditions for the acceptance of tawbah are two. So also there are two main conditions for its perfection. In this section we shall mention the noble utterance of Hadrat Mawla al-Mawali, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A), for, in fact, it is the essence of :'wisdom, being of the order of 'speech of kings and king of speech

رُوِیَ فِی نَهْجِ البَلاغَهِ أنَّ قائلاً قَالَ بِحَضْرَتِهِ: أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ: ثَکَلَتْکَ أُمُّکَ أَتَدْرِی مَا الإسْتِغْفَارُ؟ الإسْتِغْفَارُ دَرَجَهُ العِلِّیِّینَ. وَهُوَ اسْمٌ وَاقِعٌ عَلَی سِتَّهِ مَعَانٍ: أَوَّلُهَا النَّدَمُ عَلَی مَا مَضَی. وَالثَّانِی العَزْمُ عَلَی تَرْکِ العَوْدِ إلَیْهِ أَبَداً. والثَّالِثُ أَنْ تُؤَدِّیَ إلَی المَخْلُوقِینَ حُقُوقَهُمْ حَتَّی تَلْقَی اللهَ أَمْلَسَ لَیْسَ عَلَیْکَ تَبِعَهٌ. وَالرَّابِعُ أنْ تَعْمَدَ إلَی کُلِّ فَرِیضَهٍ عَلَیْکَ ضَیَّعْتَهَا فَتُؤَدِّیَ حَقَّهَا. والخَامِسُ أَنْ تَعْمَدَ إلَی اللَّحْمِ الَّذِی نَبُتَ عَلَی السُّحْتِ فَتُذِیبُهُ بِالأحْزَانِ حَتَّی تُلْصِقَ الجِلْدَ بِالعَظْمِ وَیَنْشَأَ بَیْنَهُمَا لَحْمٌ جَدِیدٌ. وَالسَّادِسُ أَنْ تُذِیقَ الجِسْمَ أَلَمَ الطَّاعَهِ کَمَا أَذَقْتَهُ حَلاوَهَ المَعْصِیَهِ فَعِنْدَ ذَلِکَ تَقُولُ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ.

It is narrated by

al Sayyid al Radi (R) in the Nahj al balaghah that some said 'Astaghfirullah (I seek God's forgiveness) before 'Ali (A). 'Ali said to him. "May thy mother mourn for thee! Do you know what is istighfar? Verily istighfar is a degree of the 'illiyyun and it is a word that means six things. First is remorse over the past. Second, the resolution not to return to it ever. Third, to return to the creatures their rights (usurped in the past) so that you meet God Almighty in such a state of purity that no one has a claim against you. Fourth, that you fulfill every duty that was neglected by you, in order to satisfy your obligation in respect of it. Fifth, that you attend to the flesh of your body that had grown on unlawful nourishment so that it melts away as a result of grief and mourning and the skin adheres to the bones, after which new flesh grows there between. Sixth, that you make your body taste the pain of obedience in the same way as it tasted earlier the pleasure of sinfulness. When you have done these things then (say Astaghfirullah!"(۱)

This noble tradition mentions firstly two essential requirements of penitence, which are remorse and the resolution not to relapse into sin. Then it mentions the two important condition for its acceptance, which are returning the rights of creatures and then of the Creator. Tawbah is not accepted from anyone on the mere verbal ,declaration

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۱- Nahj al-balaghah, ed. Subhi al-Salih, Beirut ۱۳۸۷(۱۹۶۷), p.۵۴۹, Hikam, No. ۴۱۷.

I repent.' The penitent man is one who returns everything illegitimately taken from' others. If anyone has a claim against him, he should satisfy it if possible, or acquire his .propitiation

He should discharge whatever divine obligations and duties that have remained unfulfilled, and if all of them cannot possibly be fulfilled he should try to make amends to the extent that he can. He should know that everyone of these is a claim with a claimant that would demand it of him in the other life in the hardest of conditions, and he would be unable to satisfy it without taking up the burden of others' sins and exchanging his good deeds for the satisfaction of those claims. At that time, he will be .helpless and destitute and have no way out for his relief

My dear, let not Satan and the carnal self take hold of you and make the matter appear an insurmountable difficulty in your eyes and thus finish you off by making you refrain from tawbah. Do know that it is better to act in this regard even if to a small extent. If the unoffered prayers, fasts and atonements are many, if God's unfulfilled duties are numerous and the people's usurped rights are innumerable, if your sins are abundant and your vices are plenty, do not despair of God's grace and' do not lose hope in His mercy. God Almighty will facilitate your passage if you act to the extent of your capacity and He

will show you the path of salvation. You should know that to despair of the mercy of God is the biggest of sins and I don't think that any other sin has a more evil effect .upon the soul

A person that despairs of divine mercy, his heart is so full of gloom and he becomes so unbridled that nothing can correct him. Beware, lest you despair of God's mercy and consider sins and their consequences as insurmountable. God's mercy is greater than everything and encompasses all things, and God's justice is not bound by conditions. What were you, to begin with? In the void of nothingness, when there was no question of capacity or worthiness, God, the Supreme and the Glorious, endowed you with the bounty of being and the excellences of existence without any request or .prayer or any worthiness or capacity on your part

Then He provided you with His unlimited bounties and His unending favors, subjecting all the creatures to you. Even now your condition is not worse than absolute nothingness and pure non-being. Moreover, God has promised mercy and forgiveness. Take a step forward towards His Holy threshold and He will Himself assist you by all means. If you cannot make amends for the return of His rights, He will overlook your failure. If you cannot satisfy the rights of others, He will compensate for it. And you have already heard the story of the young grave-opener during the times of the Messenger of Allah

.(S)

My dear, the path of God is easy and simple. All that it requires is some attentiveness. Postponement, delay, neglect and allowing the sins to pile up day after day is what makes the matter difficult. But resolute action and decision to set aright the affairs of the soul makes the path shorter and the task easier. Make an experiment by taking some action. If you achieve results, the truth of this matter will be proved to you. .Otherwise the path of perversion is open and the hands of your sinfulness are long

The other two things mentioned by Amir al-Mu'minin (A) are the conditions for a perfect tawbah and a thorough penitence. Not that tawbah is not realized or accepted .without them, rather it does not become perfect in their absence

Let it be known to you that everyone of the stations (manazil) of the wayfarers has stages (maratib)which differ in accordance with the state of their hearts. If the penitent person wants to attain to its perfect degree, after having attended to the omissions - i.e. after having made good for the neglect of the duties-he should now attend to the accretions also. That is, he must now take up the spiritual accretion .acquired during the days of sinfulness

That takes place by completely wiping out the physical and spiritual effects produced in the realm of the self so that the soul recovers its former refinement and its primordial, natural spirituality by a process of thorough purification. As you already

know, every sin and pleasure produces an effect upon the soul in the same way as the body too derives nourishment from some of them. Hence the penitent person should with manly courage and determination exterminate all those effects and their traces .(through physical and spiritual austerities, as taught by Mawla 'Ali (A

Thus through physical austerities and abstinence from pleasures and dietary luxuries, through obligatory or supererogatory fasting, he should remove the flesh that accumulated in his body through sin or during his sinful days. By means of spiritual exercises, worship and ritual devotions he must attend to the accretions of carnal nature. This is because the forms of physical pleasures still linger in the soul, and as these forms are present there the carnal self is inclined toward them and the heart is infatuated with them and it is feared that, God forbid, the self would rebel again and .snatch away its reins

Hence it is necessary for the wayfarers of the Hereafterly path and the penitent from sins to make the soul taste the pain of austerities and worship. If a night was spent in sin and licentiousness, that must be compensated with a night's watch devoted to the worship of God. If a day was spent in corporeal pleasures, that must be compensated with fasts and appropriate devotional rites. This is necessary so that the soul may be completely purged of the effects arid traces of the attachments arising from the love of the world. If this is

done, tawbah, of course, becomes perfect arid the soul's primordial brilliance returns .to it

Throughout the course of such exercises he must contemplate and meditate upon, the consequences of sin, the severity of God Almighty's might, the precision of the Balance of deeds, and the intensity of the chastisement of Barzakh and Resurrection. He must understand and make his self and heart understand that all these things are consequences and forms of one's vicious deeds, of opposition to the King of kings. It is hoped that after this knowledge and reflection the soul will loath sins and detest them with a complete and total hatred, thus attaining the intended result of tawbah, which .now becomes perfect and complete

Those two stages thus are what make the station of tawbah perfect and complete. Of course, when man at first wishes to enter the station of tawbah, he must not think that he is required to reach the last of stages, so that the path appears to him to be full of difficulty and hardship and he decides to leave off once for all. To whatever extent the wayfarer of the path of Hereafter is able to traverse this path, it is good and desirable to that extent. After that, when he sets out on the path, God Almighty .makes the journey easy for him

Hence the difficulty of the journey must not stop one from setting out towards his destination. For the goal is very great and important, and once one understands

the greatness of the goal the hardships of the path become easy and bearable. Tell me, what goal is higher than eternal salvation, joy and bless? What peril is greater than eternal wretchedness and damnation? By shunning tawbah or postponing it and delaying it one may subject oneself to eternal wretchedness, unending punishment and everlasting damnation, and by performing it one may obtain absolute felicity and become the beloved of God. Hence if the goal is so great, why should one be scared of ?a few days' hardship

You should know that whatever action one can take, even if little, is beneficial. Compare the matters of the Hereafter with worldly affairs, wherein the worldly wise, if they are incapable of attaining their highest objective, do not desist from reaching a lower goal. If an objective cannot be obtained in its totality, that does not prevent them from attaining it partially. You too, if you are incapable of attaining this objective to its perfect degree, should not give up the principal goal itself. Try to achieve it to the .extent that is possible for you

The Result Of Istighfar

Of the things in respect of which it is necessary for the penitent person to act is taking refuge in the forgiveness of God Almighty and attainment of the state of istighfar. Openly and secretly, mournfully and pleadingly, in solitude, with lamentation, tears and wails of woe, he should implore the forgiveness of His Sacred Essence to cover .his sins and wipe out their consequences

Of course, the

forgivefulness and the veiling grace of that Sacred Essence implies the covering of defects and forgiveness of the sins' consequences. And since the spiritual forms of deeds are like a man's offspring, or something even more closely linked to him, and since the reality of tawbah and the form of istighfar is tantamount to disowning and cursing (li'an), God Almighty, since He is the All-forgiving and the Veiler, dissociates those offsprings of the penitent from him on account of his li'an and separates them .from him

Thereupon He obscures that sin from the sight to all those beings that have come to know about his sin, including the angels and the notaries of offences, the time and the place of its commission, as well his own bodily members and organs, and makes them :forget it, as pointed out in the noble tradition which says

يُنْسِى مَلَكَيْهِ مَا كَتَبا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ.

.He makes His two angels forget that which they have recorded of his sins

And possibly God Almighty's 'inspiring' the bodily members and organs, as well as the earth's locations, to conceal the sins, as mentioned in the noble tradition, is the same as the erasing of the sins from their memory. It is also possible that it means a command to abstain from giving testimony. Or perhaps that which is meant is the obliteration of the effects of sins from bodily members, whose presence amounts to their existential witness, so that if one did not perform tawbah every one of his ,organs

.either with the tongue of speech or condition, would bear testimony to his deeds

As it is, God's station of forgivefulness and His veiling grace have required that now that we are in this world our organs and members abstain from giving testimony about our deeds and time and space conceal our actions. In the same way, if we leave this world with genuine tawbah and sincere istaghfar, they will conceal our deeds, or our deeds will be totally obscured for them. And perhaps the second explanation is more in order in view of the God Almighty's magnanimity, so that the penitent human .being is not ashamed in front of anyone. And God knows best

On The Interpretation Of Tawbah Nasuh

You should know that there is difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of the term tawbah nasuh and a brief mention of it is suitable here. Here we will confine .(ourselves to translating the words of the greater researcher al-Shaykh al-Bahai (Q

The informed traditionist al-Majlisi (M) quotes al-Shaykh al-Baha'i as having said that the exegetes have given several meanings of tawbatan nasuh. According to one of them, it means a tawbah that 'advise' the people, that is invites them to simulate him on account of the good effect produced in its performer, or that it 'counsels' its .performer to root out sins and to never return to their commission

Another interpretation is that tawbah nasuh is a tawbah which is done purely (khalis) for God's sake, in the same way as pure honey free from wax is called

asal nasuh. And sincerity means that the remorse should be on account of the‘ ugliness of sins or because they are contrary to God’s good pleasure, not for the fear .of hellfire

The honorable researcher al-Tusi has ruled in the Tajrid that a remorse felt for sins .on account of the fear of hellfire is not tawbah at all

According to another interpretation, nasuh is related to nasabah, which means tailoring, because tawbah sews together the body of faith torn by sin, or because it joins the penitent person to God’s awliya’ and His lovers in the same way as separate .pieces of cloth are joined together by tailoring

According to yet another interpretation, ‘nasuh’ here is an attribute of the penitent and is linked to tawbah in a metaphorical manner. That is, tawbah nasuh is a tawbah whose performer counsels and advises himself to perform it as perfectly and completely as it is worthy of being performed until the effects of sins are totally purged from the heart, which is attained by making the soul melt with regret and grief .and by clearing the darkness of vices by the light of virtues

All Beings Are Endowed With Life And Knowledge

Let it be known to you that there are certain realities, mysteries and subtleties for tawbah, and there is a specific tawbah particular to his own station for every one of the wayfarers of the path towards God. And since we do not partake of those stations, an elaboration of their details is not proper for these pages. Therefore it is

better to conclude this discourse with the mention of a point inferable from the noble tradition, which is also in accordance with the literal meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur'an and a large number of traditions scattered through various chapters. That point is that every one of the existents is possessed of knowledge, life and .consciousness

Rather, all the existents possess the marifah (gnosis) of the station of God, the Glorious and the Sublime. The inspiration imparted to bodily organs and members and the earth's locations regarding the concealment (of sins) and their obedience to divine commands, the tasbih of all existents referred to expressly in the Glorious Qur'an and with the mention of which things the noble traditions are replete - all these are proof of their knowledge, cognition and life. Rather, they constitute the proof of a special relation between the Creator and the creation, of which none has any knowledge except the Sacred Essence of God Almighty and those who it pleases Him should .know

And this is itself one of the teachings that the Noble Qur'an and the traditions of the inerrant Imams have imparted to mankind, which is also in agreement with the views of the emanationist philosophers and the mystics, as well as the experience of the mystics. In the sublime science of metaphysics it has been proved that existence is identical with divine Excellences, Names and Attributes and at whatever level they manifest themselves and are reflected in a mirror, the manifestation

is accompanied with all the aspects and excellences, including life, cognition and the rest of the seven main Attributes. And every one of the phases of manifestation of the reality of being and every level in the descendence of the light of the perfect beauty of the Deity has a special relation with the One, through which it has the secret gnosis of .the Lord, as stated in the noble verse

(مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّى عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.)

(There is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by the forelock. (۱۱:۵۶

It is said that huwa (He) refers to the mystery of Divine Ipseity, and 'the taking by the forelock' is the same mysterious, secret primordial existential relation the way to .whose cognition is closed to all existents

Eighteenth Hadith: Remembrance Of God

point

بِالسَنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى فَخْرِ الطَّائِفَهِ وَذُخْرِهَا مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ، عَنْ أَبِى حَمْزَهَ الثَّمَالِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَكْتُوبٌ فِى التَّوْرَاهِ الَّتِى لَمْ تُغَيَّرْ أَنَّ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ سَأَلَ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ: يَا رَبِّ أَقَرِيبٌ أَنْتَ مِنِّى فَأُنَاجِيكَ أَمْ بَعِيدٌ فَأُنَادِيكَ؟ فَأَوْحَى اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَيْهِ: يَا مُوسَى أَنَا جَلِيسُ مَنْ ذَكَرَنِى. فَقَالَ مُوسَى: فَمَنْ فِى سِتْرِكَ يَوْمَ لا سِتْرَ إِلا سِتْرَكَ؟ فَقَالَ: الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَنِى فَأَذْكُرُهُمْ وَيَتَحَابُّونَ فِيَّ فَأُحِبُّهُمْ. فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُصِيبَ أَهْلَ الأَرْضِ بِسُوءٍ ذَكَرْتُهُمْ فَدَفَعْتُ عَنْهُمْ بِهِمْ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Ibn

Mahbub, from 'Abd Allah ibn Sinan, from Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "It is written in the Torah that has not been altered that Moses (A) asked his Lord (saying): 'O Lord! (Tell me) art Thou near me, so that I should pray to Thee in whispers, or art Thou far, that I should cry out. to Thee?' Thereat God Almighty revealed to him: 'O Moses! I am the companion of one who remembers me.' Moses said: 'Who are those that shall be in Thy refuge on the day when there shall be no refuge except Thy refuge?' He replied: 'Those who remember Me, whom I do remember; those who love one another for My sake, whom I love. They are those whom I remember whenever I wish to strike the earth's people with affliction, and (consequently spare them on their account."(١)

Exposition

It is shown by this noble tradition that the Torah current amongst the Jews is a corrupted and an altered one. The knowledge of the true Torah was with the Ahl al-Bayt (A). From the contents of the current Torah and Gospels it appears that they do not meet the standard of even the speech commonly acceptable of a human being (to say nothing of the criterion of Divine speech); rather, the delusions of some followers .of carnal lust and desire have been incorporated in them

The researcher and traditionist al-Majlisi (M) says, "It appears that the intention of Hadrat Musa by this question was

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۱- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, ii, kitab al-du'a', bab ma yajib min dhikr Allah fi kulli majlis, hadith .No.۴

to inquire about the etiquette of prayer, while he knew that God is nearer to one than his jugular vein, with an encompassing nearness based on knowledge, power and .causal efficiency

He meant to say, ‘Do You like to be prayed to in whispers, like one speaks to someone near, or should I call You like one who calls out to someone far away?’ In other words, ‘When ‘I look at You, I find You nearer than anything that is near, and when I look at myself I find myself .at a far distance. Thus, I don’t know whether I should take into consideration Your situation in my prayer or my own condition:’ And it is possible that this question was made on behalf of someone else, like the question related to the .(possibility of Beatific vision” (mentioned in the Qur’an, ۷:۱۴۸

It is possible that Moses intended to express his feeling of loss and wonder in respect of the manner of praying. He meant to say, “O Lord! You are too immaculate and above everything for nearness and farness to be attributable to You, that I may address You as one who is near or one who is far. Hence I am at a loss in this matter, for I do not consider any manner of prayer to be suitable for Your glorious station. So permit me to pray, and show me its manner. Teach me that which is appropriate for Your sacred station.” The answer came from the Source

of Glory and Majesty that, “I, as the Sustainer, am present in all the manifold levels and realms of existence. All the worlds constitute My presence. Yet, I am the ”.companion of those who remember Me and am by the side of those who call Me

Of course, proximity and distance cannot be attributed to that Sacred Essence. It possesses the encompassment of sustenance (ihateh ye qayyumi i.e. the encompassment that God Almighty possesses over all being as its sustainer) and existential all-inclusiveness (shumul al-wujudi) over all the domains of being and all the streams of reality. However, that which is mentioned in the noble verses of the Glorious Book of God regarding the attribution of nearness and proximity to God ,Almighty, such as the verses

(وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِی عَنِّی فَإِنِّی قَرِیبٌ أُجِیبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِی إِذَا دَعَانِی.)

And when My servants question thee concerning Me, (tell them that) I am near to (answer the call of the caller, when he calls to Me. (۲:۱۸۶

(وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ.)

And We know what his soul whispers within him, and We are nearer to him than the (jugular vein. (۵۰:۱۶

and others like them, constitute a kind of metaphor and allegory. Otherwise, His sacred being is above proximity and distance, physical or immaterial; for these qualities entail limitation (tahdid) and likeness (tashb’ih, i.e. to creatures) and God Almighty is beyond them. Rather, the presence of all existents in the court of His sanctity is a relational presence, and the encompassment of

that Sacred Essence over the particles of the universe and the chains of existents is the encompassment of sustenance, which is something other than sensible or spiritual presence and is different from outward and inward encompassment.

From this noble tradition, and some other traditions as well, the preference for concealed remembrance (dhikr al-khafi) and the desirability of remembrance within the heart and secretly can be inferred. This is also indicated by the noble verse:

(وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنْ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ.)

Remember thy Lord in thy soul, humbly and fearfully, not loud of voice, at morn and eventide. (۷:۲۰۵)

In a noble tradition it is stated that the reward (thawab) of this remembrance, on account of its greatness, is known to none except God Almighty. In some circumstances and states the preference may lie with overt remembrance, like the remembrance done in front of the negligent for the sake of reminding them. Hence it is mentioned in a noble tradition of al-Kafi that one who recalls God Almighty amongst the negligent is like one who fights against the muharibun (i.e. those who have taken up arms against God and Islam). The following tradition is mentioned in the 'Uddat al-dai of Ibn Fahd:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ ذَكَرَ اللهَ فِي السُّوقِ مُخْلِصاً عِنْدَ غَفْلَهِ النَّاسِ وَشُغْلِهِمْ بِمَا هُمْ فِيهِ كَتَبَ اللهُ لَهُ أَلْفَ حَسَنَهٍ وَيَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَهُ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ مَغْفِرَهً لَمْ تَخْطُرْ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ.

The narrator says that the Prophet (S) said, "One who recalls God in the

marketplace, with sincerity, in the midst of the people's obliviousness and their engagement in its affairs, God writes for him a thousand merits and forgives him on the Day of Resurrection with a forgiveness that has not occurred to any human (heart."(۱)

Similarly, it is mustahabb to make the dhikr aloud in the adhan, in sermons, and other .things

It is stated in this noble tradition that the remembrance of God and mutual love and friendship for His sake have certain characteristics. One of them, which is more important than the others, is that the remembrance' of God by the servant results in God's remembering him, and this matter is also mentioned in other traditions. This remembrance stands in opposition to the neglect (nisyan) mentioned by God Almighty :(in relation to one who forgets God's ayat (signs, verses

(قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِی أَعْمَی وَقَدْ كُنتُ بَصِيرًا. قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنسَى.)

He shall say, 'O my Lord, why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was wont to see?' God shall say, 'Even so it is. Our ayat came unto thee, and thou didst forget them; and so (today thou art forgotten.' (۲۰:۱۲۶

In the same way as the forgetting of the ayat and inward blindness to the manifestations of Divine glory and beauty result in blindness in the other world, so do the remembrance of the ayat, the Names, and the Attributes and the remembrance of God, His beauty and majesty strengthen the inward vision and remove the obscuring screens in

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.Ahmad ibn Fahd, 'Uddat al-dai, ۲۴۲ -۱

proportion to the strength of the dhikr and its luminosity. When the remembrance of the ayat becomes a faculty (malakah), the inner vision becomes so strong that it begins to see Divine beauty in the ayat. The remembrance of the Names and the Attributes results in the vision of God in the manifestations of the Names and the .(Attributes (tajalliyat al-asma'iyyah wa sifatiyyah

The remembrance of the Essence without the veils of .the ayat, Names and Attributes removes all the veils and affords the unobstructed vision of the Beloved. And this is one of the interpretations of 'the triple victories' (futuhat al-thalathah) which make up the highest delight of the 'urafa' and alwliya': fath al-qar'ib (the nearer victory), fath al-mubin (the manifest victory), and fath al-mutlaq (the absolute victory), which is fath .al-futuh, the ultimate victory

In the same way as the threefold remembrance removes the threefold veils, mutual love for the sake of God also leads to God's love, and the result of this love is also the .removal of veils, as pointed out by the illustrious urafa

Obviously, this love (God's love) has also various degrees, for the love for the sake of God has also many levels in respect of sincerity and vitiation. Complete sincerity is that which is free even from the flaw of the plurality of the Names and Attributes (kathrat al-asma i wa sifati), and it results in complete love. The absolute lover will not be deprived of communion in the code of love, and there

will remain no obstruction between the lover and the Beloved. With this exposition, we may establish a relation between the two questions of Moses (A).

For after hearing God Almighty declare that He is the companion (jalis) of one who remembers Him, and after hearing from the Beloved Himself the promise which he coveted in his heart, of the union with the Beauty, he wanted to discover the identity of those who shall achieve the union, so that he may fulfill his duty in all its aspects. Hence he asked:

فَمَنْ فِی سِتْرِکَ یَوْمَ لا سِتْرَ إلا سِتْرَکَ؟

Who are they that shall be in Thy refuge on the day when there shall be no refuge except Thy refuge?

That is, who are they who, in Thy refuge, have attained emancipation from all attachments and freedom from obstructive barriers, attaining communion with Thy supreme beauty? He is told: ‘They are the two groups: those who are in My remembrance, and those who love one another mutually, who are also in My remembrance in respect of the complete manifestation of My beauty, that is man. They are in My refuge, being My companions and I theirs.’ This shows that these two groups possess one great quality, which results in another great characteristic.

Because God Almighty remembers them and makes them His beloved ones, the result is that they obtain His refuge on the day when there is no refuge, their companion being God in the place of absolute seclusion. The other characteristic is that

God Almighty spares His creatures of chastisement for the sake of their nobility. That is, as long as they are in the midst of the creatures, He does not send chastisement .and calamities upon them for the sake of them

The Difference Between Tafakkur And Tadhakkur

Let it be known to you that tadhakkur (remembrance) is the result of tafakkur (contemplation). Hence the station of tafakkur has been considered to precede that of :tadhakkur. Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari says

التَّذَكُّرُ فَوْقَ التَّفَكُّرِ. فَإِنَّ التَّفّكُّرَ طَلَبٌ وَالتَّذَكُّرَ وُجودٌ.

Tadhakkur stands above tafakkur, for verily tafakkur is the search (of the Beloved) .(and tadhakkur is the attainment (of the Beloved

As long as man is on the path of search, he is separate from the searched object. With the finding of the searched beloved, he is relieved of the labor of search. The strength and the perfection of tadhakkur is dependent on the strength and perfection of tafakkur. The tafakkur whose result is complete tadhakkur of the Worshipped One does not compare with other actions in regard to merit. Accordingly, in the noble traditions, an hour of tafakkur is considered to be better than the 'ibadah (worship) of .a year, or even that of sixty or seventy years

It is obvious that the ultimate goal and fruit of the 'ibadat is the attainment of the knowledge and remembrance of God, and this is better attainable through valid contemplation. Perhaps, an hour's contemplation may open to the wayfarer the door to mystic knowledge, which may not be opened even by seventy years of

ibadah, or it may make a human being so mindful of the Beloved that not even the‘ .austerities of several years can be able to achieve such a result

And my dear, let it be known to you, the remembrance of the Beloved and keeping the heart engaged in the memory of the Adored One have many results for all the classes of people. As to the perfect ones, the awliya’ and the ‘urafa’, it is the ultimate goal of their hopes, under whose shadow they receive communion with the Beloved’s splendor—may it do them much good! As to the ordinary people and the mutawassitun, it is the noblest of the formative agents of morality and conduct, in .outward as well as inward life

If man remain in the remembrance of God Almighty in all conditions and states, and see himself as present in the court of that Sacred Essence, he would of course refrain from the matters which are contrary to His good pleasure, and check the self from rebelliousness. All the calamities and afflictions brought about by the carnal self and the accursed Satan are due to forgetting God and His chastisement. The forgetting of God increases the darkness of the heart and allows the carnal self and Satan to .dominate the human being, thus multiplying his afflictions day by day

The remembrance of God gives polish and burnish to the heart and makes it a reflector of the Beloved’s beauty. It purifies the soul and liberates the self of

the human being from bondages. The love of the world, which is the source of all error and the fountainhead of all sin, is purged from the heart. All the anxieties and concerns are replaced by the sole concern of purifying the dwelling of the heart for .the sake of the entry of the Dweller

Therefore, my dear, whatever pains and hardships that you bear in. the path of the dhikr and remembrance of the Beloved are little. Accustom your heart to the remembrance of the Beloved, so that, God willing, the heart itself takes on the form of dhikr, so that the immaculate pronouncement la ilaha illa Allah becomes the ultimate form and the furthest limit of perfection of the self. There is no better provision for the wayfarer in his journey toward God, no better reformer for the defects of the soul, .and no better guide to the Divine teachings

Hence, if you are a seeker of the formal and spiritual excellences, if you are a wayfarer of the Hereafter's path, a traveler and emigrant towards Allah, habituate .the heart to the Beloved's dhikr and knead it with the remembrance of God

The Complete Dhikr

Although the remembrance of God and the dhikr of that Sacred Essence is a quality of the heart, and if the heart is immersed in dhikr all the benefits that accrue from it are obtained by the heart, it is better that the remembrance in the heart be followed by oral dhikr. The most perfect and meritorious of the

degrees of dhikr is that it should be present in all levels of a man’s existence, that its domain should extend to the outward and the inward, the manifest and the concealed .realms of his being

Thereat God, the Supreme and the Glorious, becomes manifest in the core of his being. The inward form of the heart and the soul take the form of the Beloved’s remembrance, and the actions of the heart and the body take on the form of remembrance. The seven realms of corporeal being, as well as the inward domains, are conquered by the Divine dhikr and made subject to the remembrance of the .Absolute Beauty

Rather, if the inward form of the heart assumes the reality of dhikr, and the realm of the heart is conquered by it, its sovereignty extends to all the other domains. The movements and pauses of the eyes, the tongue, the hands and the feet, and the actions of all other members and faculties, are accompanied with the remembrance of God, making no move against their duties. Thereupon, their movements and :pauses begin and end with the dhikr of God

(بِاِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجْرَاهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا.)

(In the Name of Allah shall be its course and its berthing. (۱۱:۴۱

Its influence penetrates into all the realms, which are moulded as a result in accordance with the reality of the Names and the Attributes. Rather, they assume the form of the Greatest of the Names of Allah (ism Allah al-’a’zam), becoming its manifestation (mazhar). And this is

the ultimate limit of human perfection and the ultimate goal of the hopes of the elect of Allah (ahl Allah). To the same degree that there is an inadequacy in this regard and a shortcoming in the influence of dhikr, to the same extent does the degree of human excellence falls short of perfection, for the inadequacies of the inward and the outward interpenetrate each other.

This is because the various spheres of human existence are interrelated and subject to mutual influence. It is from here that it is known that oral remembrance (dhikr al-nutqi wa zabani), which is the lowest level of dhikr, is also beneficial. For it means, firstly, that the tongue carries out its obligation, although its movement is only formal, devoid of spirit. Secondly, there is the possibility that persistence in this dhikr, with due regard to its conditions, may become a means of opening the tongue of the heart too.

Our Shaykh, the perfect arif Shahabadi—may my soul be his ransom, would say: "The dhakir (one who performs dhikr), during dhikr, must be like one teaching words to a little child that has not yet learnt to speak. He repeats the word until the child's tongue is opened and the latter utters the word. After that the child has articulated it, the teacher follows the child and his fatigue caused by repetition is removed, as if he has received an encouraging assistance from the child. In the same way, one who engages in dhikr must teach

.dhikr to his heart, which has not learnt to articulate

The point that is concealed in the repetition of the adhkar is that thereby the tongue of the heart is opened, and its sign is that thereafter the tongue follows the heart and the hardship and strain of repetition is removed. First, it is the tongue which is dhakir and following it the heart also becomes dhakir with the tongue's aid and instruction. After that the heart's tongue has learnt to articulate, the tongue follows it and ".becomes dhakir with the aid of the heart or God's concealed assistance

And it should be known that the outward and formal actions don't have the capacity of life in the world of the ghayb or malakut except when they received assistance from the inward realm of the spirit and the heart's core, which bestows on them a spiritual life (hayat al-malakuti). That spiritual breath, which is the form of the sincerity of intention and sincere intention, is like the inward soul, following which the body too is .resurrected in the realm of malakut and permitted entry into the Divine court

Therefore, it is stated in the noble traditions that the acceptability of (physical) deeds is in accordance with the measure of the heart's receptivity and responsiveness (iqbal al-qalb). In spite of it oral dhikr is desirable, and it ultimately leads man to reach the Truth. Accordingly, in the traditions and reports, oral dhikr has been greatly extolled and there are few topics regarding

which there is as much a great number of traditions as the topic of dhikr. It has also been greatly extolled in the noble verses of the Glorious Book, although most of them pertain to inward dhikr (dhikr al-qalbi), or the dhikr possessing soul. The remembrance of God is lovable on whatever level that it takes place. At this stage we conclude this discourse by mentioning some noble traditions at the end for the sake of .tabarruk and tayammun

Some Traditions Concerning Dhikr

الكافِى بِسَنَدٍ صَحِيحٍ عَنِ الفُضَيْلِ بْنِ يَسارٍ قالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: مَا مِنْ مَجْلِسٍ يَجْتَمِعُ فِيهِ أَبْرَارٌ وَفُجَّارٌ فَيَقُومُونَ عَلَى غَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إلا كَانَ حَسْرَةً عَلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ.

In al-Kafi, it is reported with a sahih chain of transmission from al-Fudayl ibn Yasir that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A) said, "There is no gathering in which the virtuous and the sinful come together and thereafter stand up to leave without mentioning God Almighty except that it would be a cause of regret to them on the Day of (Resurrection."(١

It is obvious that when man discovers the great results of the dhikr of God on the Day of Resurrection and finds himself deprived of them, he will realize the irreparable loss of the bounties and delights incurred by him. As a result he will be seized with regret and remorse. Hence, as long as there is opportunity, a human being must take advantage of his gatherings and assemblies, letting them not remain empty of God's .remembrance

الكَافِى بِسَنَدٍ مَوْثُوقٍ عَنْ أبِى

p: ٥٠٨

١- Al-Kafi, ii, kitab at-du'a', bab ma yajib min dhikr Allah fi kulli majlis, hadith No. ١.

جعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَكْتَالَ بِالمِكْيالِ الأَوْفَى فَلْيَقُلْ إذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَقُومَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ: (سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ. وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ. وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.)

In al-Kafi, it is reported with a muwaththaq chain of transmission from Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said, "Whoever desires to receive the full measure (of God's blessing) should say while standing up after a gathering: 'Free is thy Lord, the Lord of Glory, from what they describe. And peace be upon the Messengers; and praise belongs to God, the Lord of all being.'(1)

And it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq that Amir al-Mu'minin (A) said:

Whoever wants to receive the full measure of recompense on the Day of Resurrection should read these noble verses following every salat.(2)

Also it is reported in a mursal tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that recitation of these verses at the time of the end of a gathering is an atonement for sins.(3)

الكَافِي بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ ابْنِ فَضَالٍ رَفَعَهُ قَالَ: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِعِيسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا عِيسَى اذْكُرْنِي فِي نَفْسِكَ أَذْكُرْكَ فِي نَفْسِي، وَاذْكُرْنِي فِي مَلَإ[كَ] أَذْكُرْكَ فِي مَلَإٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْ مَلَإِ الآدَمِيِّينِ. يَا عِيسَى أَلِنْ لِي قَلْبَكَ وَأَكْثِرْ ذِكْرِي فِي الخَلَوَاتِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ سُرُورِي أَنْ تُبَصْبِصَ إِلَيَّ وَكُنْ فِي ذَلِكَ حَيّاً وَلا تَكُنْ مَيِّتاً.

Al-Kafi, in a marfu' hadith, narrates with its chain of transmission from Ibn Faddal, from one of the Imams (A) that he said, "God Almighty said to Jesus (A), 'O Jesus, remember Me in thy self, so that I may remember thee within My

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1- Al-Kafi, ii, kitab at-du'a', bab ma yajib min dhikr Allah fi kulli majlis, hadith No. ۳.

2- Jami' al-'ahadith, kitab al-salat, hadith No. ۳۴۸۷.

3- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, xv, hadith No. ۲۸۹۰۱.

self. Mention Me in thy assembly so that I may mention thee in an assembly better than the assembly of men. O Jesus, soften thy heart for Me and remember Me much in thy solitude. Know that My delight lies in thy doing tabasbus toward Me. And be alive in that and don't be dead.'(1)

Tabasbus means the dog's wagging of its tail, out of fear or hope, and this alludes to the intensity of eagerness and humility. By 'life' in remembrance is meant the presence and attention of the heart.

الكَافِى بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ: مَنْ شُغِلَ بِذِكْرِى عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِى أَعْطَيْتُهُ أَفْضَلَ مَا أُعْطِى مَنْ سَأَلَنِى.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said: Verily God Almighty has said, "One who is kept by My remembrance from asking something of Me, I bestow upon him the best of what I have bestowed upon any petitioner that has asked anything of Me."(2)

عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ فَهْدٍ فِى عُدَّةِ الدَّاعِى عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ: إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّ خَيْرَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ عِنْدَ مَلِيكِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاهَا وَأَرْفَعَهَا فِى دَرَجَاتِكُمْ وَخَيْرَ مَا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ ذِكْرُ اللهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. فَإِنَّهُ أَخْبَرَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: أَنَا جَلِيسُ مَنْ ذَكَرَنِى.

Ahmad ibn Fahd narrates in 'Uddat al-Dai from the Messenger of Allah (S) that he said, "The best of your acts near God and the purest and sublimest of them in degree and the best thing upon which the sun has shone is the remembrance of God Almighty. Verily He has informed you, saying, 'I am

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1- Al-Kafi, ii, kitab al-du'a', bab dhikr Allah fi al-sirr, hadith No.۳.

2- Ibid., bab al-'ishtighal bi dhikr Allah, hadith No.l .

(the companion of him who remembers Me.'"(1)

The traditions concerning the excellence of dhikr, its manner, etiquette and conditions .are so many that to mention them is beyond the capacity of these pages

وَالحَمْدُ للهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً وَظَاهِراً وَبَاطِناً.

.And praise is God's at the beginning and the end, inwardly and outwardly

(Nineteenth Hadith: Backbiting (Ghibah

point

بِسَنَدى المُتَّصِلِ إلى ثِقَهِ الإِسْلامِ وَالمُسْلِمِينَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ النَّوْفَلِى، عَنِ السُّكُونِيِّ، عَنْ أبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الغَيْبَهُ أَسْرَعُ فِى دِينِ الرَّجُلِ المُسْلِمِ مِنَ الأَكْلَهِ فِى جَوْفِهِ. قَالَ: وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الجُلُوسُ فِى المَسْجِدِ انْتِظَارَ الصَّلاهِ عِبَادَهٌ مَا لَمْ يُحْدِثْ. قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ وِمَا يُحْدِثُ؟ قَالَ: الاغْتِيَابُ.

With my isnad going back to Thiqat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from al-Nawfali, from al-Sakkuni, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "The havoc wrought by ghibah (backbiting) on the believer's faith is swifter than the one wrought by the disease of aklah in the side of his body." The Imam (A) said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "To sit in the mosque waiting for the (time of) prayer is worship, so long as one does not commit a misdeed." He (S) was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what (misdeed?" He replied, "Backbiting.(2)

Exposition

Ghibah is the masdar (verbal noun) of ghaba and also that of ightiyab, as mentioned in :the dictionaries. Al-Jawhari says

واغْتَابَهُ

١- ‘٢٣٨ ,Uddat al-da’i.

٢- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, ii, “kitab al-’iman wa al-kufr”, “bab al-ghibah wa al buht”, hadith no. ١.

اغْتِيَاباً، إذَا وَقَعَ فِيهِ، وَالاسْمُ الغِيبَهُ، وَهُوَ أنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ خَلْفَ إنْسَانٍ مَسْتُورٍ بِما يُغِمُّهُ لَوْ سَمِعَهُ. فإنْ كَانَ صِدْقاً سُمِّيَ غِيبَةً وإنْ كانَ كَذِباً سُمِّيَ بُهْتاناً.

It is said) "ightabahu ightiyaban" when one falls into it (i.e. backbiting). The noun is al-) ghibah, and it means saying such things about an absent person as well distress him if .(he hears them. If it is true it is called ghibah and if false, buhtan (slander

The researcher and traditionist al-Majlisi (M) states that this meaning is a literal one. But, apparently, the author of al-Sihah has given the technical (istilahi) meaning, not the literal one, because this is not the literal meaning of ghaba, ightaba and other related derivatives. Rather, their meaning is of a more general character. The lexicographers occasionally give the technical or Shar'i meanings in their works. The author of al-Qamus is quoted to have taken ghaba to signify 'aba. According to al-:Misbah al-munir

إغْتَابَهُ إذَا ذَكَرَهُ بِمَا يَكْرَهُهُ مِنَ العُيُوبِ، وَهُوَ حَقٌّ.

Ightabahu' means making a mention of someone's actual defects that he would find .(detestable (to be mentioned

In the view of this author, none of the above-mentioned quotations give the literal meaning; rather, certain conditions inherent in each of them have led to the mix-up with the technical sense. In any case, there is not much benefit in discussing the literal meaning, for the main purpose here is relevance to the Shari'ah and religious duty, and seemingly there are certain conditions implicit in the special meaning which lie outside the literal

significance of the term (ghibah or ightiyab). Later on we will have occasion to discuss .this special sense

:Al-Majlisi says

وَالأَـكْلَهُ كَفَرْحَه، دَاءٌ فى العُضوِ يأتَكِلُ منهُ، كما فى القاموسِ وغيرِهِ. وقَد يُقرأُ بمدِّ الهَمزَهِ على وزن فاعِلَه، أى العِلَّه التى تأكُلُ اللَّحمَ، والأوَّل أوفق باللغهِ.

Aklah corresponds (in vowelization) to farhah. It is an affliction of a bodily member that consumes it, as mentioned in al-Qamus and other dictionaries. It has also been read with a mada on the hamzah, corresponding in vowelization to fallah, which means a disease that consumes the flesh, and the first one is more in accordance with .classical usage

In any case, that which is meant is that in the same way as this disease on afflicting a bodily organ - especially the subtle ones, such as pertain to the inner self - consumes it rapidly and destroys it, so does ghibah, rather more rapidly, consume a human .being's faith and destroy it

In the phrase 'malam yuhdith', 'yuhdith' belongs to the verbal form if'al and its concealed pronoun (damir mustatir) relates to the jalis, (i.e. the one sitting) implicit in the julus mentioned in the tradition. Ightiyab here is in the accusative form (mansub) and is the maf'ul (object) of the verb implicit in the questioner's speech. In some in which case ightiyab will be in the وما يَحْدُثُ instead of ما الحَدَثُ manuscripts, it is .(indicative case due to its being the predicate (khabar

The Definition Of Ghibah

Let it be known to you that the fuqaha' (R) have offered many definitions

of ghibah, whose discussion and close scrutiny is not possible here except with brevity. The blessed martyr and researcher, the Shaykh (Zayn al-Din 'Ali, known as al-Shahid al-Thani) in his kashf al-ribah 'an ahkam al-ghibah says, "There are two :definitions for it. The first one, which is famous among the fuqaha', is

هُوَ ذِكْرُ الإنْسَانِ حَالَ غَيْبِهِ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ نِسْبَتَهُ إلَيْهِ مِمَّا يُعَدُّ نُقْصَاناً فِی العُرْفِ بِقَصْدِ الإنْتِقَاصِ والذَّمِّ.

It is the mention of a person in his absence, ascribing to him something whose ascription he rinds detestable and which is generally considered as harmful (to one's .reputation), with the intention of impairing (his reputation) and disparaging him

:The second one is

التَّنْبِيهُ عَلی مَا يَكْرَهُ نِسْبَتَهُ إلَيْهِ.

.Informing about something whose ascription to one is regarded as detestable by him

The second definition is more general than the first one, if dhikr (in the first definition) be taken to mean oral mention, as it is generally understood to mean, for tanbih has a wider meaning and includes speech, writing, narration and other forms of communication. But if dhikr were taken to mean something wider than oral speech, as it does literally signify, the two definitions become similar. The traditions also suggest these two definitions, such as the one recorded in al-Shaykh al-Tusi's Amali (Majalis) :and narrated on the authority of Abu Basir

فِی وَصِيَّهِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لأبِی ذَرٍّ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ وَفِيهِ: قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، مَا الغِيبَهُ؟ قَالَ: ذِكْرُكَ أخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ. قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، فَإنْ كَانَ فِيهِ الَّذِی يُذْكَرُ بِهِ؟

قَالَ: إعْلَمْ أنَّکَ إذَا ذَکَرْتَهُ بِمَا هُوَ فِيهِ فَقَدِ اغْتَبْتَهُ، وَإِذَا ذَکَرْتَهُ بِمَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ فَقَدْ بَهَتَّهُ.

In (the tradition about) the counsel that the Messenger of Allah (S) gave to Abu Dharr (R), Abu Dharr is narrated to have said: I said: “O Messenger of Allah, what is ghibah?” He replied: “(It is) to mention of your brother that which he detests.” I said: “O Messenger of Allah, what if that which is mentioned of him should actually be in him?” He replied: “Know that when you mention that which is in him, you have committed his ghibah, and when you mention that which is not in him, then you have slandered (him.”(۱)

:In a famous tradition of the Prophet (S) it is reported

هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَا الغِيبَهُ؟ فَقَالوا: اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أعْلَمُ. فَقَالَ: ذِکْرُکَ أَخَاکَ بِمَا يَکْرَهُ.

The Prophet (S) asked his companions:) “Do you know what is ghibah?” They said:) “God and His Messenger know best.” He (S) said: “It is to mention about your brother (that which he detests.”(۲)

These traditions correspond to the first definition if we take the generally understood meaning of dhikr and to the second one if a meaning wider than oral speech is ascribed to it. No mention was made in the traditions of absence, for it was implicit in the meaning of ghibah and so was not necessary. It is evident that ‘brother’ here means a brother in-faith not a brother by kinship. ‘Ma yakrahu’ signifies the mention .of things which are ordinarily regarded as damaging

p: ۵۱۵

۱- Al-Hurr al-’Amili, Wasai’l al-Shi’ah, viii, hadith no. ۱۶۳۱۲.

۲- Al-Fayd al-Kashani al-Mahajjat al-bayda, v, ۲۶۶.

As to the intention to harm and disparage, although it is not mentioned either in the noble tradition narrated by Abu Dharr or the famous prophetic tradition, it can be understood from the context. Rather, the opening of Abu Dharr's narration indicates it, and there was no need of an explicit mention. The narration opens in this manner:

الغِيبَهُ أشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنا. قُلْتُ: وَلِمَ ذاکَ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: لأنَّ الرَّجُلَ يَزْنِی فَيَتُوبُ إلی اللهِ فَيَتُوبُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَالغِيبَهُ لا تُغْفَرُ حَتّی يَغْفِرَهَا صَاحِبُهَا... وَأكْلُ لحَمْهِ مِنْ مَعَاصِی اللهِ.

The Prophet [S] said: "Ghibah is a graver sin than adultery." I said, "How is that, O Messenger of Allah?" "That is because a man commits adultery and repents to God and God accepts his repentance. But ghibah is not forgiven (by God) until it is forgiven (by its victim." Then he (S) said, "The eating of his flesh is a sin vis-a-vis God."(١)

These two sentences reveal that the intention to injure is implicit, otherwise if someone is mentioned with kindness and compassion, it is not an offence against him so as to require his forgiveness, nor it amounts to eating his flesh.

The general character of ghibah is also understandable from the following narration of 'A'ishah:

دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْنا امْرَأَهٌ، فَلَمّا خَرَجَتْ أَوْمَأْتُ بِيَدِی أَنَّهَا قَصِيرَهٌ. فَقَالَ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: لَقَدِ اغْتَبْتِهَا.

A'ishah says: ('A woman came to visit us, and when she turned to go away I made a gesture by my hand to indicate that she is short of height. Thereupon, he (S)

١- Wasai'l al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ١٨٣١٢.

(said, “You have committed her ghibah.”(١

It may be said that the import of the traditions concerning ghibah, as understood in accordance with usage, does not limit it to linguistic expression. Rather, it extends the prohibition to apply to any such kind of communication. That is, the specific mention of linguistic expression is due to its being the more common form in which, ghibah is .committed, not because it is limited to it

Another thing is that the general import of many traditions indicates that it is haram to reveal the secrets of the faithful (mu’minun). That is, it is forbidden to divulge and uncover their concealed defects, whether of a bodily, moral or behavioral nature, regardless of whether the person to whom they pertain is willing or not, and .irrespective of whether a malicious intent is involved or not

However, an overall examination of the traditions shows that malicious intent underlies the prohibition, except when the act per se should be such that its mention and its publicity are proscribed by the Shari’ah - such as sins against God, which not even the sinner may proclaim and whose admission amounts to publication of indecency - and this does not relate to the prohibition (hurmah) on ghibah. It is not improbable that the revelation of the secrets of the faithful even in case of their willingness should be haram, even when there is no malicious motive involved. In any .case, further elaboration in this aspect is outside the scope of our discussion

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.Al-Naraqi, Jami’ al-sa’adat, ii, ٢٩۴ -١

should know that there is consensus about the hurmah of ghibah. Rather, it is one of the essentials of fiqh, being a major and mortal sin. Discussion of its fiqhi aspect and the exceptions that relate to it is outside the scope of these pages. That which is necessary here is to inform about the viciousness of this fatal vice and its consequences, so that, God willing, by reflecting upon them we may abstain from it, and if, God forbid, we commit it, we may desist immediately from it and repent, purify ourselves of its abomination, and not permit ourselves to remain in this filth and the affliction of this faith-consuming mortal sin while departing from this world. This is because this major mortal sin has an ugly, deformed form in the spiritual world hidden behind the veils of the corporeal. In addition to its evil, it is the cause of disgrace in front of the Sublime Company (al-mala' al-'ala) and in the presence of the apostles, prophets and the archangels. Its spiritual form is the same as what God, the Blessed and the Exalted, has indicated in His noble book and which has been pointed out explicitly and implicitly in the noble traditions. Allah, the Glorious and the Exalted, says:

(وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ.)

Neither backbite one another; would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would abominate it. (۴۹:۱۲)

We are neglectful of the fact that our

deeds return to us in the other world as objectified entities, with forms appropriate to their character. We do not know that this act (i.e. ghibah) has the form of cadaver eating. It will return to its perpetrator in the hell in its other-worldly (malakut) form, for he, like a ferocious dog, has torn other people's honor to shreds and devoured their (moral) flesh.

وَفِی رِوَایَهٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ لَمَّا رَجَمَ الرَّجُلَ فِی الزِّنَا قَالَ رَجُلٌ لِصَاحِبِهِ: هَذَا أُقْعِصَ كَمَا یُقْعَصُ الكَلْبُ. فَمَرَّ النَّبِیُّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ مَعَهُمَا بِجِیفَهٍ فَقَالَ: إنْهَشَا مِنْهَا. فَقَالا: یَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، نَنْهَشُ جِیفَهً؟ فَقَالَ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَا أَصَبْتُمَا مِنْ أَخِیكُمَا أَنْتَنُ مِنْ هَذِهِ.

In a tradition, it is narrated that once the Messenger of Allah (S) stoned a man for commission of adultery. One of the persons present remarked to his companion, "This one was finished where he stood, like a dog." Thereafter, the Prophet, accompanied by the two men, passed by a carcass and he (S) said to them, "Now take a bite of it, you two," They said, "O Messenger of Allah, should we take a bite of a carcass?!" The Prophet replied, "That which you have taken of your brother was more putrid than this."(۱)

Yes, the Noble Messenger (S) with the light of his powerful insight saw the greater putridness of their action, greater than that of a decomposed carcass, and the more abominable and repulsive character of its form. It is mentioned in another tradition that the perpetrator of

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۱- Al-Mahajjat al-bayda', v, ۲۶۳.

ghibah would devour his own flesh on the Day of Resurrection. In a tradition of al-Wasa'il, cited from the Majalis (Amali) of al-Saduq (R), Amir al-Mu'minin (A) is reported :to have said the following in the course of his advice to Nawf al-Bakali

قَلْتُ: زِدْنِی. قَالَ: إجْتَنِبِ الغِيبَهَ فَإنَّهَا إدَامُ كِلابِ النَّارِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا نَوْفُ، كَذَبَ مَنْ زَعَمَ أنَّهُ وُلِدَ مِنْ حَلالٍ وَهُوَ يَأكُلُ لحُومَ النَّاسِ بِالغِيبَهِ.

Nawf al-Bakali says: I said: Tell me something more. He (A) said, "Abstain from ghibah, for it is the food of the dogs of hellfire." Then he added, "O Nawf, untrue is the one who claims to be of legitimate birth and yet devours the flesh of people through (backbiting."(١)

There is no contradiction between these noble traditions, and all these things are possible. It is possible that the backbiter shall eat the flesh of carcasses, devour his own flesh, have the form of a carcass-eating dog, and, simultaneously, be a carcass that is devoured by the hounds of hell. There, the forms are subject to the efficient dimensions and a being may possess several outward forms - something the proof of .which has been given in its appropriate place

وَعَنْ عِقَابِ الأَعْمَالِ بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فی حَدِيثٍ: مَنْ مَشَی فِی غِيبَهِ أخِيهِ وَكَشْفِ عَوْرَتِهِ كَانَتْ أوَّلُ خُطْوَهٍ خَطَاهَا وَضَعَهَا فِی جَهَنَّمَ وَكَشَفَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهُ عَلَی رُؤُوسِ الخَلائِقِ.

Al-Saduq) in 'Iqab al-'a'mal, narrates with his isnad from the Messenger of Allah (S)) that he said in a tradition, "One who walks on the

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ١٦٣١٩ -١

path of the ghibah of his brother and the divulging of his defects, the first step that he takes will be into hell and God shall divulge his defects in front of all the creatures."(1)

Such is his state on the Day of Resurrection and in hell and that is how God, the Exalted, shall disgrace him amongst the creatures and in the presence of the inhabitants of the celestial realms. In al-Wasa'il, with a chain of transmission reaching Imam al-Sadiq (A) the Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

وَقَالَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنِ اغْتَابَ امْرَءاً مُسْلِماً بَطَلَ صَوْمُهُ وَنَقَضَ وُضُوءَهُ وَجَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَهِ تَفُوحُ مِنْهُ رَائِحَهٌ أَنْتَنُ مِنَ الْجِيفَهِ يَتَأَذَّى بِهِ أَهْلُ الْمَوْقِفِ، فَإِنْ مَاتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتُوبَ مَاتَ مُسْتَحِلّاً لِمَا حَرَّمَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

The Noble Messenger (S) said, "whoever backbites a Muslim spoils his fasts and breaks his wudu' and shall come on the Day of Resurrection with his mouth stanching more putridly than a carcass and it shall irk those who are with him in his station (mawqif). If he dies before repenting, his death is like that of one who dies while considering the things prohibited by God, the Exalted and the Glorious, as permissible."(2)

This is his state before his entry into hell, so that he is disgraced in front of the people of his mawqif and is reckoned among the kuffar, for the mustahill (one who considers haram as halal) of God's maharramat (that which has been forbidden by God) is a kafir. The backbiter

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Iqab al-'a'mal, ۳۴۰.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ۱۶۳۱۶.

mughtab) is, in effect, like him according to this noble tradition. Another tradition has) been narrated from the Messenger of God (S) regarding the state of such a one in the :Barzakh

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَـالَ: قَـالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَـلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَـلَّمَ: مَرَرْتُ لَيْلَهَ أُسْـرِىَ بِى عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَخْمِشُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ بِأَظَافِيرِهِمْ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا جِبْرَائِيلُ، مَنْ هَؤُلاءِ؟ قَالَ: هَؤُلاءِ الَّذِينَ يَغْتَابُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَقَعُونَ فِى أَعْرَاضِهِمْ.

Anas ibn Malik says: The Messenger of Allah (S) said: On the night of my celestial journey (mi'raj) I passed by a people scratching their faces with their finger nails. I said, "O Gabriel, who are these?" He replied, "These are those who perpetrated the (people's ghibah and slandered their reputation."(١)

This shows that the backbiter suffers disgrace and infamy in the Barzakh and faces humiliation in front of the people of his mawqif. He will dwell in disgrace and dishonor in the hell too. Rather, some of its degrees will bring him disrepute in this world also, :as is mentioned in the following noble tradition of al-Kafi

عَنْ إِسْـحَاقَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: سَـمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَـلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ أَسْـلَمَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يُخْلِصِ الإِيمَـانَ إِلَى قَلْبِهِ! لا تَـذُمُّوا الْمُسْـلِمِينَ وَلا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَبَّعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ وَلَوْ فِى بَيْتِهِ.

Ishaq ibn 'Ammir reports on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Messenger of Allah (S) said, "O you who have embraced Islam with their tongues but faith has not entered

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.Al-Mahajjat al-bayda; v, ٢۶١ -١

whose hearts, don't disparage Muslims and don't be after their defects. Verily, God will be after the defects of him who is after their defects, and one who has God after his defects will be humiliated even in his own house."(۱)

God, the Blessed and the Exalted, is ghayur (i.e. sensitive about His honor) and the exposing of the secrets and defects of the faithful is tantamount to violation of His honor. If a man surpasses all limits in his shamelessness and violates Divine sanctities, God, the Honorable, exposes his secrets, which He had concealed before out of His concealing grace. Such a man is then disgraced in this world before the people and in that world in front of the angels, the prophets and the awliya' (A). In a noble tradition of al-Kafi whose isnad goes back to Imam al-Baqir (A) it is stated:

لَمّا أُسْرِیَ بِالنَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ قالَ: یا رَبِّ، مَا حالُ المُؤْمِنِ عَنْدَکَ؟ قالَ: یا مُحَمَّدُ، مَنْ أَهانَ لِی وَلِیّاً فَقَدْ بارَزَنِی بِالمُحارَبَهِ، وَأَنَا أَسْرَعُ شَیْءٍ إلَی نُصْرَهِ أَوْلِیائِی.

Imam al-Baqir (A) said: During his celestial journey, the Prophet (S) said to God, "My Lord, what is the status of the mu'min before Thee?" He replied, "O Muhammad, whoever insults a friend of mine, has declared open war against Me, and I am the quickest of all in rallying to the aid of My friends."(۲)

There are many traditions in this regard. In a tradition whose isnad goes back to Imam al-Sadiq (A), al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports the Imam

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۱- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab man talaba 'atharat al mu'minin", hadith no. ۲.

۲- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab man adha al-Muslimin", hadith no. ۸.

:as having said

وَمَنِ اغْتَابَهُ بِمَا هُوَ فِيهِ فَهُوَ خَارِجٌ مِنْ وَلايَهِ اللهِ تَعَالى دَاخِلٌ فِی وَلايَهِ الشَّيْطَانِ.

Whoever perpetrates the ghibah of such a person (i.e. of one who conceals his defects and is just in outward conduct, though he should be a sinner in his own eyes) (will go out of the wilayah of Allah, the Most Exalted, and enter the wilayah of Satan.(۱)

It is obvious that one who leaves the wilayah of God will enter the wilayah of Satan and will not be characterized with faith and salvation. As mentioned in the tradition of Ishaq ibn 'Ammar, the Islam of the backbiter is merely oral, not having entered his heart. It is also obvious that one who has faith in God and believes in the Day of Judgment and in encounter with the forms of deeds and the reality of sins, such a person will not commit such a major mortal sin which brings disgrace in the apparent and the hidden worlds, in the life of this world as well as in the barzakh and the Hereafter, leads to the evil affliction of hell, and expels him from the wilayah of God .and makes him enter the wilayah of Satan

If we perpetrate such a major sin, then we must know that it arises from a polluted source, that the reality of faith has not entered our hearts. Should faith enter the heart, things will undergo a reform and its effects will percolate to all the hidden and ,the manifest

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Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-'anwar, lxxv, "bab al-ghibah", hadith no. ۱۲, from al Saduq's - ۱ 'al-'Amali

.the outward and the inward realms of one’s being

Hence, we must cure the ills of the hearts and the inner self. The traditions reveal that in the same manner as the weakness of faith and lack of its sincerity results in moral and behavioral vices, so do these vices in their turn lead to further deterioration or rather destruction of faith. This is in accordance with rational proofs, as demonstrated .in its proper place

And let it be known to you that this sin is graver and of greater evil consequences than other sins from another aspect. It lies in this that in addition to violating the right of God (haqq Allah) it violates the rights of people (haqq al-nas), and God does not forgive the backbiter unless the victim is propitiated by him. This theme is mentioned .in the noble hadith through several chains of transmission

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الحَسَنِ فِی المَجالِسِ وَالأَخْبَارِ بإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی ذَرٍّ عَنِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ فِی وَصِیَّتِهِ لَهُ قَالَ: الغِیبَهُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنَا. قُلْتُ: وَلِمَ ذَاکَ یَا رَسُولَ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: لأَنَّ الرَّجُلَ یَزْنِی فَیَتُوبُ إلی اللهِ فَیَتُوبُ اللهُ عَلَیْهِ، وَالغِیبَهُ لا تُغْفَرُ حَتَّی یَغْفِرَهَا صَاحِبُهَا... وَأَکْلُ لحَمْهِ مِنْ مَعَاصِی اللهِ.

It is narrated in al-Majalis wa al-‘akhbar with isnad on the authority of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan from Abu Dharr from the Prophet (S) that, in a counsel that he (S) gave to him, he (S) said, “O Abu Dharr, beware of backbiting, for backbiting is graver than adultery.” (Abu Dharr says) I said: “Why

is that so, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "That is because when a man commits adultery and then repents to God, God accepts his repentance. But backbiting is not (forgiven until forgiven by its victim."(١)

In the traditions narrated in 'Ilal al-sharayi', al-Khisal, Majma' al-bayan and Kitab al-'ikhwan the same or a similar point has been made. If, God forbid, one were to depart from the world with people's rights on his neck, his task would be very difficult. As to the rights of God, one has to deal therein with the Noblest and the Most Merciful, Whose sacred being is free from hatred, enmity, vengefulness, and the urge to satisfy the thirst for revenge. But if one had to deal with creatures, it is quite possible that one will get entangled with someone with such traits, who will not easily forgive .anyone or will not be placated at all

Hence it is necessary for man to be careful of himself and pay due attention to these matters, for the danger of it is very great and the matter is of supreme difficulty. The traditions concerning the serious nature of ghibah are more than can be quoted here .and we shall confine ourselves to a few of them

رُوِیَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ أَنَّهُ خَطَبَ یَوْماً فَذَکَرَ الرِّبَا وَعَظَّمَ شَأْنَهُ فَقَالَ: إنَّ الدِّرْهَمَ یُصِیبُهُ الرَّجُلُ مِنَ الرِّبَا أَعْظَمُ عِنْدَ اللهِ فِی الخَطِیئَهِ مِنْ سِتٍّ وَثَلاثِینَ زِنْیَهً یُزْنِیهَا الرَّجُلُ. وَإنَّ أَرْبَی الرِّبَا عِرْضُ الرَّجُلِ المُسْلِمِ.

(In a sermon, the Prophet (S

p: ۵۲۶

.Wasail al-Shiah, viii, hadith no. ۱۸۳۱۲ -۱

spoke about usury and its great evil. Then he said, “Verily, a single dirham earned by a man through usury is greater (in sinfulness) than thirty-six counts of adultery. And verily, more heinous than usury is (violating) the honor of a Muslim.(1)

رُوِیَ عَنْ النَّبِیِّ، صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: مَا النَّارُ فِی الیَبْسِ بِأَسْرَعَ مِنَ الغِیبَهِ فِی حَسَنَاتِ العَبْدِ.

The Prophet (S) said, “No fire is faster in consuming dry wood than ghibah consuming a devotee’s virtues.”(2)

وَعَنْ النَّبِیِّ، صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: یُؤْتَی بِأَحَدٍ یَوْمَ القِیَامَهِ فَیُوقَفُ بَیْنَ یَدَیِ الرَّبِّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَیُدْفَعُ إِلَیْهِ کِتَابُهُ فَلا یَرَی حَسَنَاتِهِ فِیهِ فَیَقُولُ: إِلَهِی لَیْسَ هَذَا کِتَابِی، لا أَرَی فِیهِ حَسَنَاتِی! فَیُقَالُ لَهُ: إِنَّ رَبَّکَ لا یَضِلُّ وَلا یَنْسَی، ذَهَبَ عَمَلُکَ بِاغْتِیَابِ النَّاسِ. ثُمَّ یُؤْتَی بِآخَرَ وَیُدْفَعُ إِلَیْهِ کِتَابُهُ فَیَرَی فِیهِ طَاعَاتٍ کَثِیرَهً فَیَقُولُ: إِلَهِی مَا هَذَا کِتَابِی، فَإِنِّی مَا عَمِلْتُ هَذِهِ الطَّاعَاتِ! فَیُقَالُ لَهُ: إِنَّ فُلاناً اغْتَابَکَ فَدُفِعَ حَسَنَاتُهُ إِلَیْکَ.

The Prophet (S) said: A person shall be made to halt in front of the Glorious and Exalted Lord on the Day of Resurrection and handed over his book. On not seeing his good deeds therein he shall say, “My God, this is not my book, for I don’t see my virtues in it.” He shall be told, “Verily, your Lord neither errs nor forgets. Your deeds are gone for your backbiting of the people.” Then another person shall be brought and handed over his book. He will see in it many deeds of obedience (ta’at) and he will say, “My God, this

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1- Al-Mahajjat al-bayda’, v, ۲۶۳.

2- Al-Mahajjat al-bayda’, ۲۶۴.

is not my book, for I have not performed these deeds of obedience." He shall be told, "So and so committed your ghibah and so his good deeds have been awarded to (you."(1)

وَعَنْ النَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: أَدْنَى الكُفْرِ أنْ يَسْمَعَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ كَلِمَةً يَحْفَظُهَا عَلَيْهِ يُرِيدُ أنْ يَفْضَحَهُ بِهَا. أُولَئِكَ لا خَلاقَ لَهُمْ.

The Prophet (S) said, "A lower degree of kufr is for a man to hear something from his brother and to commit it to his memory intending thereby to cause him humiliation. (Such persons shall have no share (in the Hereafter.)"(2)

The traditions cited here relate specifically to the subject at hand. But in case the backbiter were guilty of other sins and vices besides -such as the insult, humiliation, contempt and disparaging of a believer (mu'min), the revelation and counting of his failings, and his defamation, each of which is an independent cause of one's destruction- the traditions condemning each of them are overwhelming and .shattering. We abstain from citing them here for brevity's sake

The Social Harms Of Ghibah

This greatly heinous vice and highly fatal sin, which is a destroyer of faith and morality, of the outward and the inward, which brings man disgrace and ignominy in the world and the Hereafter as alluded to in the preceding section, has also social evils .and in this respect its ugliness and evil are greater than those of many other sins

One of the great objectives of the teachings of the great prophets (A) apart from being an independent goal in itself

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۱- Jami' al-'akhbar, ۱۷۱, with some difference of wording.

۲- A similar tradition in al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab man talaba' atharit al-mu'minin".

and a means for forwarding great goals, as well as being completely essential for the formation of a perfect society (al-madinat al fadilah) is unity of belief and creed and solidarity in regard to all important matters, and resistance to the unjust aggressions of oppressors, which cause the corruption of humanity and ruin the foundations of .wholesome society

This great objective, on which the reform of individual and society depends, cannot be achieved except in the shadow of unity, solidarity, mutual love and brotherhood amongst the individuals of society and the sincerity of their hearts and their inner and outward purity, so that the human race and its members come to constitute a single person and personality with individuals as its parts and members. All their efforts and endeavors have revolved around this ogle great divine objective and this momentous .rational goal, wherein lies the good of individual and society

Should such love and brotherhood be born in a race or tribe, it would dominate all other tribes and nations that do not possess this quality. The truth of this matter comes to light if we study history, especially that of the battles and great victories of Islam. At the advent of this divine faith, since there was a measure of this unity and solidarity amongst Muslims and their efforts were accompanied by sincerity of .intention, they could achieve great victories in a short period

In a brief span of time they overwhelmed the great empires of that age, namely

Iran and Rome. Smaller in number, they could defeat heavily armed armies with an endless number of soldiers. The Prophet of Islam established the covenant of brotherhood amongst early Muslims and the relationship of brotherhood came to prevail between all Muslims on the basis of the Quranic text:

(إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ.)

(Indeed, the believers are brethren. (۴۹: ۱۰)

The following traditions are recorded in the noble al-Kafi:

عَنِ العَقَرْقُوفِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ لأَصْحابِهِ: إتَّقُوا اللهَ وَكُونُوا إخْوَةً بَرَرَةً مُتَحَابِّينَ فِى اللهِ، مُتَوَاصِلِينَ، مُتَرَاحِمِينَ. تَزَاوَرُوا وَتَلاقوا وَتَذَاكَرُوا أَمْرَنَا وَأَحْيُوهُ.

Al Aqarqufi says: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say to his companions, "Fear God and be righteous brethren, loving one another for the sake of God, mutually interlinked and merciful into one another. Visit one another, meet one another, remind one another about our affair (i.e. Imamate), and keep it alive."(۱)

وَعَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: يَحِقُّ عَلَى المُسْلِمِينَ الإجْتِهَادُ فِى التَّوَاصُلِ وَالتَّعَاوُنِ عَلَى التَّعَاطُفِ وَالمُؤاسَاةُ لأَهْلِ الحَاجَهِ وَتَعَاطُفُ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ حَتَّى تَكُونُوا كَمَا أَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ.)

Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said: It a the duty of all Muslims to strive in respect of mutual relations, cooperation, kindness and charity to the needy and mutual affection amongst themselves, until you become as God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has commanded you to be (saying): They are merciful unto one another.(۲)

وَعَنْهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: تَوَاصَلُوا وَتَبَارُّوا وَتَرَاحَمُوا وَكُونُوا إخْوَةً بَرَرَةً كَمَا أَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) also said, "Cultivate mutual relations, be kind and merciful to one another and

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۱- Al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-tarahum wa al-ta'atuf", hadith no. ۱.

۲- Al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-tarahum wa al-ta'atuf", hadith no. ۴.

be such true brethren as God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has commanded you to be."(1)

It is evident that that which strengthens this mutual love and brotherhood is desirable, and that which severs this tie of mutual connection and brotherhood and creates disunity is regarded as detestable by the Lawgiver and is opposite to His great objectives. It is quite clear that if this great fatal sin were to become prevalent in a society, would cause enmity, envy, hatred and hostility amongst its people and the roots of corruption will spread through it.

Then the tree of hypocrisy and two-facedness will take roots in it, which shall grow and shatter the unity and solidarity of society, weakening the foundations of piety, which in turn will increase its corruption and repulsive character.

Hence, it is obligatory upon every pious and honorable Muslim, in order to safeguard his own person against corruption, to protect his coreligionists from hypocrisy, to preserve the Islamic society, to safeguard its unity, and to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, to protect himself from this vice and forbid others from this repulsive act.

And if, God forbid, he has been guilty of this ugly act, he must repent and, in case it is possible and there is no chance of vicious consequences, seek the propitiation of the victim and his forgiveness; otherwise, he must implore God's mercy for him. He must get rid of this vice and water the roots of sincerity, unity and solidarity in his heart, so as

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۱- Al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-tarahum wa al-ta'atuf", hadith no. ۳.

to be amongst one of the sound members of society and one of the vital spokes of the .wheel of Islam. And God is the guide of all towards the path of righteousness

The Cure Of This Malady

You should know that the remedy of this great vice, like that of other vices, is possible by means of beneficial knowledge and action. As to the knowledge, it lies in this that man should reflect over the benefits resulting from this deed and compare them with its evil consequences and ugly fruits. He must weigh them in the balance of reason and seek a Judgment therefrom. Of course, man is no enemy of himself. All his sins arise from ignorance, unawareness, and negligence of their basic nature and .consequences

As to the imagined benefit of this vice, it amounts to a few minutes of satisfaction of one's carnal desire arising from the mention of people's defects and divulging of their secrets, or an hour spent in convivial company amid pleasantries and sly gossip .inspired by bestial or satanic nature and aimed to satisfy the thirst of vengeful hearts

As to its ugly effects, some of them were mentioned in the earlier sections. Now listen to some more of them, place them in the balance of Judgment and draw lesson from it, for, of course, this comparison and reflection shall yield fair results. As to the effects of ghibah in this world, one of these is that it lowers a man in the people's estimation and deprives him of their

confidence. The people by nature are endowed with a love of perfection, virtue, and goodness and a hatred of defectiveness, baseness, and ugliness.

Accordingly, they make a distinction between persons who avoid divulging hidden defects and refrain from tearing the veils that guard their honor and safeguard their secrets and others who are not such. Even the backbiter himself, by virtue of his reason and innate moral nature, considers one who avoids such vices as superior to himself.

Moreover, should he trespass the bounds in perpetration of this vice and tear the veils that guard people's honor, God will disgrace him in this world itself, as mentioned in the narration of Ishaq ibn 'Ammar cited earlier. And man must fear a humiliation brought about by God Almighty, for it will be irreparable. I take refuge in God from the wrath of the Forbearing Lord.

Moreover, it is very possible that the slandering of the reputation of believers and the divulging of their concealed defects' will result in a wretched hereafter for man. For when this act becomes a part of man's conduct it leaves certain effects on the soul, one of which is production of enmity and hatred towards the victim, which increase little by little.

At the time of death, when some realities become revealed to man and he observes certain supersensible realms, the veils of malakut having been lifted, this hatred and enmity may cause him on beholding the station of his victims and the honor and blessings granted

them by God Almighty, to hate God Almighty. For it is natural for man to regard his enemy's friend as his own enemy and to hate one who loves one he hates. Thus, he will leave this world with enmity of God and His angels and depart to everlasting .ignominy and wretchedness

My dear, be friendly to the servants of God who enjoy His mercy and bounty and who have been adorned with the robes of Islam and iman, and cultivate a heart-felt affection for them. Beware lest you feel enmity towards the beloved of God, for God Almighty is the enemy of the enemies of His beloved one and He will throw you out of the gardens of His mercy. The elect of God are hidden amongst His servants and who knows if this enmity on your part and your violation of the honor of this man of faith (mu'min) and your divulging of his defects will not be considered an offence against ?Divine honor

The mu'minun are the awliya' (friends) of God. Their friendship is the friendship of God; their enmity is the enmity of God. Beware of the wrath of God and the enmity of :the intercessors on the Day of Judgment

وَيْلٌ لِمَنْ شُفَعَاؤُهُ خُصَمَاؤُهُ.

Woe to him whose intercessors [i.e. those who were supposed to intercede in his .favor] are his enemies

Meditate for a while about the fruits of this sin in this world and the Hereafter. Reflect for a while about the fearsome, frightful forms that will beset

you in the grave, in the Barzakh, and on the Day of Resurrection. Refer to the authentic works of Shi'i scholars (R) and the traditions narrated from the Immaculate .Imams (A); for what they have to say in this regard is truly overwhelming

Then compare and weigh a quarter of an hour's pleasantries, idle gossip and satisfaction of the imaginative lust with thousands upon thousands of years of adversity (that, too, when you are amongst those who deserve salvation and depart from this world in a state of faith) or eternal damnation in hell and everlasting painful .(chastisement (and we seek refuge in God from it

Furthermore, even if you have enmity with a person whose ghibah you commit, that enmity requires that you should not commit his ghibah if you have faith in the ahadith; for it is stated in the hadith that the good deeds of the backbiter are transferred to the book of deeds of the victim of his ghibah and his sins are transferred to the book of .the backbiter. Therefore, your enmity of him boils down to an enmity of yourself

Hence, you should know that you cannot fight with God. God has power to make that person endearing and respectable in the eyes of people by the very means of your ghibah of him and humiliate you in their eyes through the same means. He can deal with you in the same manner in the presence of the archangels. He can fill your book of

deeds with vices and humiliate you. He can fill the book of deeds of your victim with fair deeds and grant him favor and honor.

Hence, understand well the extent of the power of the Omnipotent with Whom you are at war and beware of His enmity!

As to the action, it lies in this that one should for a period muster all one's power and rid his soul of this sin at all cost. He must bring his tongue under control and be fully watchful of himself, and make a covenant with himself to abstain from this sin for a certain time, being vigilant and watchful over himself and calling himself to account. God willing, it is hoped that after some time he will find himself reformed and free of its traces. Gradually the task will become easy for him and after some time he will feel that he has a natural disposition to dislike and detest it. Thereat, he will come to possess spiritual peace and delight in achieving freedom from this vice.

The Priority Of Abstinence From Permissible Ghibah

Let it be known to you that the ulama and fuqaha (R) have excepted certain cases from the prohibition of ghibah, which, according to the statements of some of them, number more than ten. Here, we do not intend to enumerate them, for this is not a place for legal discussions. That which is essential to be mentioned here is that man should never consider himself secure from the ruses of his carnal self. He should conduct himself

with total carefulness and caution and should not be after fabricating excuses in order to plunge into pleasantries and faultfinding by taking resort in one of the permissible .exceptions

The ruses of the self are most subtle. It may seduce man by fooling him through the Shari'ah and lead him into mortal perils. For instance, it is permissible to do the ghibah of one who does not conceal his violations of Divine commands (mutajahir bi al-fisq), or rather it is even obligatory in some cases when it can help in restraining him and is considered one of the stages of al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an almunkar. But one must examine whether his own personal motive by this ghibah is a godly and shari one, or if it is prompted by a satanic and selfish motive. If the motive is a godly one, his .act would be reckoned among 'ibadat

Rather, the ghibah of the mutajahir and the sinner with the motive of his reform is one of the most evident cases of expression of kindness and munificence toward him, although he himself may not understand it to be so. But if it is tainted with evil and carnal desire, then one must turn to the purification of his intent and refrain from .meddling with people's honor without wholesome intention and purpose

Moreover, to habituate the self to cases of permissible ghibah is also harmful for it, for the self is inclined toward mischief and indecency. It is possible that the

absence of restraint in the permissible cases gradually leads it to another stage belonging to the prohibited cases. This is similar to entry into shubuhat (cases where doubt exists as to an act's permissibility), which is permissible but not desirable for its proximity to that which has been prohibited (maharramat). For it is possible that man may be led into maharramat through entry into them. Man must restrain his self as far as possible from these matters and refrain from everything when there is a possibility .of its becoming unruly

True, one must certainly act in cases where ghibah is obligatory, as in the aforementioned case and some other cases pointed out by the ulama; but one must also purge one's intention of the desire of the carnal self and the promptings of Satan. However, in cases of permissibility, it is better and preferable to abstain from it. Man must not commit everything that is permissible, especially in such matters as these .where the seductions of the self and Satan are very effective

It is narrated that Jesus (A) in the company of his disciples once passed by the carcass of a dog. The disciples said, "How badly does this carcass smell!" Jesus (A) declared, "What white teeth it has!" Of course, a teacher of the human species must possess such a purified self. He did not like that one of God Almighty's creations should be mentioned in a disparaging fashion. They saw its defect, and that Hadrat pointed out to them

one of its excellences. I have heard that it is narrated in hadith that Jesus (A) said, "Don't be like a fly that sits upon filth. Don't be such that you notice only the defects of people."

It is narrated that the Noble Messenger (S) said:

طُوبَى لِمَنْ شَغَلَهُ عَيْبُهُ عَنْ عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ.

Blessed is the man who has been detained by his own defects from noticing the defects of other people.(1)

It would be good if one were as inquisitive about one's own defects as he is about the defects of people. How ugly it is of a man with thousands of defects to neglect his own and attend to those of others adding them to the heap of his own defects! Should man explore his own states, conduct and acts and devote himself to their correction, his affairs would be reformed. But should he regard himself as free of defect that is the height of his ignorance. For no defect is worse than this that man should be unaware and negligent of his own defects yet be attentive to the defects of others, while he himself is a mass of defects and shortcomings.

On The Prohibition On Listening To Ghibah

In the same manner as ghibah is prohibited, so also listening to it, being its companion, is also prohibited; rather, as some traditions show, the listener is like the backbiter in all the evil respects, even in regard to his act being a major sin and the obligation to propitiate the victim.

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الْمُسْتَمِعُ أَحَدُ الْمُغْتَابِينَ.

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1- Sharh Shihab al-'akhbar, ٣٠۶; al-Mahajjat al-bayda', v, ٢۶۴.

".Prophet (S) said, "The listener is one of the two backbiters

وَعَنْ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: السَّامِعُ أَحَدُ الْمُغْتَابِينَ.

(Ali (A) said, "The listener is one of the two who engage in backbiting."(1)

Hence, one who listens to ghibah is also a backbiter. Sami' here means mustami'. .Therefore, as many traditions indicate, it is obligatory to refute ghibah

عَنِ الصَّدُوقِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ، عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ - فِي حَدِيثِ الْمَنَاهِي - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ نَهَى عَنِ الغِيبَهِ والإسْتِمَاعِ إِلَيْهَا، إِلَى أَنْ قَالَ: وَمَنْ تَطَوَّلَ عَلَى أَخِيهِ فِي غِيبَهٍ سَمِعَهَا فِيهِ فِي مَجْلِسٍ فَرَدَّهَا عَنْهُ رَدَّ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَلْفَ بَابٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَهِ، فَإِنْ هُوَ لَمْ يَرُدَّهَا وَهُوَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى رَدِّهَا كَانَ عَلَيْهِ كَوِزْرِ مَنِ اغْتَابَهُ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

In a tradition reported by al-Saduq with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A), the Noble Messenger (S) is once said to have forbidden ghibah and listening to it as well. Then he (S) said, "Lo, whoever does a favor to his brother by refuting his ghibah on hearing it in a gathering, God shall save him from a thousand kinds of evils in this world and the Hereafter. And if he doesn't do so in spite of his ability to refute it on him shall be the (burden of one who commits his ghibah seventy times."(2)

وَعَنِ الصَّدُوقِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ - فِي وَصِيَّهِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِعَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ -: يَا عَلِيُّ، مَنِ اغْتِيبَ عِنْدَهُ أَخُوهُ الْمُسْلِمُ فَاسْتَطَاعَ نَصْرَهُ فَلَمْ يَنْصُرْهُ خَذَلَهُ اللهُ

.In Ghurar al-hikam, ii, ۱۲ -۱

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ۱۶۳۱۶ -۲

فِی الدُّنْیا وَالآخِرَه.

In a tradition reported by al-Saduq with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A), the Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Amir al-Mu'minin (A) in the course of a counsel that he gave him: "O 'Ali! When someone hears the ghibah of his Muslim brother and it is committed in his presence, yet he does not rally to his assistance despite being capable of doing so, God shall humiliate him in the world and the Hereafter.(۱)

وَعَنْ عِقَابِ الأعْمَالِ بِسَنِدِهِ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ رَدَّ عَنْ أَخِیهِ غِیبَهً سَمِعَهَا فِی مَجْلِسٍ رَدَّ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَلْفَ بَابٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ فِی الدُّنْیا وَالآخِرَه، فَإنْ لَمْ یَرُدَّ عَنْهُ وَأَعْجَبَهُ کَانَ عَلَیْهِ کَوِزْرِ مَنِ اغْتَابَ.

In Iqab al-'a'mal, al-Saduq reports with his isnad from the Prophet (S) that he said, "Whoever refutes the ghibah of his brother that he hears in a gathering, God shall turn away from him a thousand kinds of evils in this world and the next. But if he fails to refute it and is even pleased thereat, his burden of sin is like that of the backbiter.(۲)

The Allamah of the latter-day ulama, the great researcher and embodiment of the merits of knowledge and deed, al-Shaykh al-'Ansari (R) says:

It appears that by 'refutation' (radd) here is meant something other than forbidding ghibah, and it implies defending and offering assistance to the absent person with something related to the ghibah. For instance, if the defect mentioned is one related to worldly affairs, he may say in

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۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ۱۶۳۳۶.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. ۱۶۳۴۰.

his defense, “A defect is one which God Almighty has reckoned as such, such as sin, and the biggest of sins is that which you yourself are committing by doing ghibah of your brother by ascribing to him something which God has not considered a defect of his.” And if it is one related to religion, he may explain it in such a way as not to be counted a sin on his part. And if it cannot be explained away, he must defend it by saying, for instance, “A believer is at times guilty of sin, and it is fitting that we pray to God to forgive him rather than expose his faults. Perhaps your exposing of his fault is ”.a bigger sin before God Almighty than his

At times the listener, besides abstaining from absolving the absent person from the ghibah, induces the backbiter to commit ghibah, or he may encourage the backbiter by going along willingly with him by such oft-repeated interjections as “Strange!” Or if he is one of the pious ones, by uttering some sacred formula such as ‘Astagh firullah’ or something else, acts which are in fact the Devil’s artifices. It is probable that the noble tradition which mentions the burden of the listener as being seventy times that !of the backbiter refers to such persons as these. And we take refuge in God from it

Al-Shahid Al-Thani’s Discourse

The honorable shaykh, the precious researcher and the blessed martyr al-Shahid al-Thani (R) has a discourse in this regard and

:with this noble discourse, we conclude this section. He says

Of the filthiest kind of ghibah is that which is committed by some hypocritical persons in the garb of men of knowledge and understanding, for they carry out their (evil) intentions in the garb of righteousness and piety. They commit ghibah and yet pretend to abstain from it. Due to their ignorance and neglect, they don't know that they are guilty of two indecencies at once: riya' and ghibah. Similar to it is the case of the person who when somebody is mentioned before him says, "Al-humdulillah, that we are not afflicted with the love of office," or "...that we are not afflicted with the love of the world" or that "we do not possess such and such a quality." Or, for instance, he will say, "Na'udhubillah, from lack of shame," or "from incapability," or he will say, ."May God safeguard us" from such and such an act

Sometimes the praise of God is by itself ghibah if the fault of someone is understandable from it. However, it is a ghibah expressed in a pious and self-righteous form. This kind of person wanted to mention the fault of someone through an utterance that all at once carries ghibah, riya' and the claim to be free from defect, .although he has these defects which are greater than the one he ascribes to another

One of the ways of ghibah is that at times he (the backbiter) will praise the person whose ghibah he wishes

to commit. For instance, he will say, "So and so enjoys elevated spiritual states. He does not fall short in his worships, but due to lack of endurance, which afflicts us all, he has become somewhat lethargic in his ritual duties." In this wary he himself pretends to be blameworthy while he intends to find fault with the other person. In fact, his purpose is to extol himself by simulating to be one of the pious through his apparent self-criticism. This man has involved himself in three indecencies: ghibah, riya', and self-righteousness. He imagines himself to be one of the righteous and one who refrains from ghibah. This is how Satan plays games with the ignorant and the unaware who are outwardly involved in the pursuit of knowledge and righteous action without having attained firmness on the path. Hence, Satan pursues them and brings .their good deeds to nothing and laughs at them

And to this category belongs the one who, when someone's ghibah is done in a gathering and some of those present have not heard, says "Subhan Allah, what an amazing thing" in order to call their attention to the ghibah. This person makes the remembrance (dhikr) of God a means to realize his corrupt vain purpose. Nevertheless, he imagines having done a service to God Almighty by this dhikr, and .this is nothing but ignorance and vanity

Also to this category belongs the one who says that such and such a thing happened ,to so and so, or rather

such and such a thing happened to “our friend” or “our companion” and then adds, “May God forgive him and us.” This person makes a pretence of sympathy and friendliness and perpetrates ghibah under the cover of prayer. But God knows the wickedness of his heart and the viciousness of his intention. He does not know that .God is more wrathful toward him than the ignorant man who commits ghibah openly

Among the concealed kinds of ghibah is listening to it with amazement, for such a person expresses his amazement in order to make the backbiter more lively in his descriptions and his amazement encourages the latter in his act of ghibah. For instance, be will say, “This really makes me amazed!” or “I didn’t know that!” or “I didn’t know he would do such a thing!” These expressions are meant to affirm the backbiter’s statements and to encourage him subtly to add something more, whereas to affirm ghibah is also ghibah; or rather to listen to it or even to keep silent on .hearing it is also ghibah

At times, other vices are also added to ghibah, adding to its perversity, ugliness and punishment, like the backbiting person who expresses friendship and intimacy in front of the victim of his ghibah and praises and extols him. This is a kind of hypocrisy (nifaq) double-facedness and double-tonguedness that have been condemned in :unambiguous terms in the traditions

فِی الكَافِی الشَّرِيفِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ لَقِیَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ بِوَجْهَيْنِ وَلِسَانَيْنِ

جاءَ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ وَلَهُ لِسَانَانِ مِنْ نَارٍ.

In the noble al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said, "Whoever encounters Muslims with two faces and two tongues, he will come on (the Day of Resurrection with two tongues of fire."(1)

Such is the form of this ugly act and the result of such a hypocrisy in the Hereafter. I seek refuge in God Almighty from the evil of the tongue and the carnal self. And all .praise is God's, at the beginning and the end

(Twentieth Hadith: Pure Intention (Ikhlas

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الثِقَهِ الجَلِيلِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ القَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنِ المِنْقَرِيِّ، عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عُيَيْنَهَ، عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِى قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً) قَالَ: لَيْسَ يَعْنِى أَكْثَرُ عَمَلاً وَلَكِنْ أَصْوَبُكُمْ عَمَلاً. وَإِنَّمَا الإِصَابَهُ خِشْيَهُ اللهِ وَالنِّيَّهُ الصَّادِقَهُ وَالحَسَنَهُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: الإِبْقَاءُ عَلَى العَمَلِ حَتَّى يَخْلُصَ أَشَدَّ مِنَ العَمَلِ. وَالعَمَلُ الخَالِصُ: الَّذِى لا تُرِيدُ أَنْ يَحْمَدَكَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ إلا اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. وَالنِّيَّهُ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ العَمَلِ. ألا وَإِنَّ النِّيَّهَ هِىَ العَمَلُ. - ثُمَّ تَلا قَوْلَهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - (قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ.) يَعْنِى عَلَى نِيَّتِهِ.

With my isnad reaching back to the venerable and trustworthy shaykh Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (Q) from Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from al-Minqari, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A), who, explaining the utterance of God Almighty: That He might try you (to see) which of you ,is fairest in works. (۶۷:۲), said

p: ۵۴۶

.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr", "bab dhi al-lisanayn", hadith no. ۱ -۱

It does not mean one of you whose deeds are more numerous but one who is more" rightful in his conduct, and this rightness is nothing but the fear of God and sincerity of intention (niyyah) and fear." Then he (A) added, "To persevere in an action until it becomes sincere is more difficult than (performing) the action itself, and sincerity of action lies in this that you should not desire anyone to praise you for it except God Almighty, and intention supersedes action. Lo, verily, intention is action itself." Then he recited the Qur'anic verse, "Say, everyone acts in accordance with his character – (shakilatihi- (١٧:٨۴), adding, "That shakilah means niyyah."(١)

Exposition

Bala' (mentioned in verse ۶٧: ٢) means 'test' and 'examination' as pointed out by al-Sihah:

بَلَوْتُهُ بَلْواً: جَرَّبْتُهُ واختَبَرتُه، وبَلاه الله بلاءً وأبْلاهُ إبْلاءً حسناً وابْتَلاهُ أى اختَبَرَهُ.

Balawtuhu balwan' means 'I tested him', 'I examined him', and 'balahu Allah bala'an',' or 'ablahu ibla'an hasanan' or ibtaluhu means 'He (God) tested him'.

Ayyukum' is the second object (maf'ul duwwom) for li yabluwakum, with the sense of' knowing being implicit in it, according to al-Majlisi. But this does not seem to fit, because the interrogative pronoun ayy makes the verb conditional on action ('amal). is a nominal sentence (jumleh-ye mubtada أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً That which is correct is that wa khabar) and is the object of the verb balwa. If ayy is taken to be relative pronoun (mawsulah), there is a sense for the statement of al-Majlisi (M). But its interrogative character is more

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١- Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, ii, kitab al- iman wa al-kufr, bab al-'ikhlas, hadith No.۴.

.evident

Sawab is the opposite of khata’ (error), as mentioned by al-Jawhari. The second ‘khashyah’ (fear) does not appear in some manuscripts, as mentioned by al-Majlisi, and should it be there, there are several probable interpretations for it, the more evident of which is that the waw here is in the sense of ma’a (with). And this phrase is sincere and‘) وَالنِّيَّةُ الصَّادِقَةُ وَالحَسَنَةُ (narrated in the Asrar al-salat of al-Shahid al-Thani (M وَالنِّيَّهُ الصَّادِقَهُ وَالخِشْيَهُ). fair intention’; instead of

Ibqa’ ‘ala al-’amal means observance of action and exercising care over it, as pointed :out by al-Jawhari, who says

أبقَيتُ على فُلانٍ إذا أرْعَيتُ علَيهِ ورَحِمْتُه.

Shakilah has (also) the sense of tariqah (way), shakl (shape), and nahiyah (region), as :mentioned in al-Qamus and al-Sihah. Al-Qamus states

الشّاكِلةُ: الشَّكلُ والنّاحِيةُ والنّيّه والطَّريقَةُ.

We will, God willing, explain that which needs explanation in this noble hadith in .course of a few sections

The Meaning Of ‘Test’ In Relation To God

The clause, “That He might try you…” (quoted in the tradition) refers to the utterance :of God Almighty

(تَبَارَكَ الَّذِى بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. الَّذِى خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاهَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا.)

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Kingdom and Who is powerful over everything, Who created death and life, that He might try you which of you is fairest in works. (۶۷: ۱-۲)

The muhaqqiq al-Majlisi (Q) says, “This noble verse (which refers to the ‘creation’ of death) indicates that death is something which has being, and means either death as ”.something that happens to life or essential non-existence

verse indicates a sense in which creation relates to it (death) as a substance; it does not indicate a sense in which the relation is accidental, as pointed out by the muhaqqiqun. And the possible sense of death as essential non-existence does not apply here, for ascription of being to something essentially non-existent involves a contradiction, with the further observation that to ascribe the sense of essential non-existence to death does not appear in itself to be something correct.

However, that which is correct is that 'death' means transference from the apparent corporeal realm (nash'eh-ye zahereh-ye mulkiyyeh) to the hidden higher realm (nash'eh-ye bateneh-ye malakutiyyeh). Or 'death' means the second life in malakut (the realm higher to that of physical nature) following the first life in the realm of mulk (physical nature). Both of these senses involve being, or rather refer to a mode of being more complete than that of mulk.

This is because life in the world or physical nature is adulterated with lifeless physical materials and their life is an ephemeral accident, as opposed to the substantial (i.e. inherent in substance) life of the realm of malakut where the souls obtain independence (from all elements of lifelessness that characterize the physical world). That realm is the realm of life, life being its essential quality, and the non-corporeal bodies of Barzakh (abdan al-mithaliye barzakhi) have their existential dependence on the souls, as has been demonstrated in the place proper to it.

Moreover, the life of malakut - which is expressed

by ‘death’ (al-mawt, in the verse) in order not to weigh heavily on the ears of the .listeners - does relate to creation and is under the power of the Sacred Essence

The meaning of ‘trial’ and ‘test’ and the character of their ascription to God, the Exalted and the Glorious, was mentioned during the earlier exposition of some traditions. It was explained that ignorance (implicit in the meaning of ‘trial’ and ‘test’) cannot be ascribed to the Sacred Essence, and there is no need of interpretations and .studied explanations in this regard. Here we shall briefly explain this issue

At the beginning of their creation, the human souls are nothing but pure potentialities and are devoid of every kind of actuality inclining either toward felicity or wretchedness. It is only after their coming into the ambit of physical, substantial motion and voluntary actuality that the potentialities and capacities change into actualities and distinctions. Hence the difference between the felicitous and the wretched, the fat and the lean, comes into existence in corporeal life (hayat al-mulki), and the purpose of the creation of life is the distinction and examination of the souls. Thus the relation of trial and creation becomes clear. As to the creation of death, it has also a role in these distinctions, or rather it is the last link in the causative process .((of the emergence of distinctions in the realm of actuality

For the criterion in the realm of actuality is the ultimate forms with which man makes

the migration (from mulk to malakut); also, the criterion in the distinctions is the otherworldly malakuti forms that are acquired through the substantial and voluntary movements of the corporeal world. This also makes clear the relation of testing and trial to creation of death and life, without involving any ignorance (on the part of God). An exposition of this issue elaborate enough to dispel all the doubts surrounding it depends on a discussion of God's essential knowledge prior to creation ('ilm al-dhati qabl al ijad) and His actual knowledge accompanying creation ('ilm al-fi'lli ma'a al-'ijad), which is outside the scope of this exposition. And the Divine utterance, "(that He might see) which one of you is fairest in action," as well as the trial relating to the more righteous of deeds, relate to the above-mentioned matter, and hence the noble .tradition

This is because the relative fairness of deeds has been interpreted as their relative rightness, which in turn is made to depend on fear and sincerity of intention. These are the inward forms of the soul, which make up the real distinctive features of the souls or are the manifestations of the hidden distinctions among the essences. And because of the fact that outward action affects the heart and the inward self, these distinctions are also brought about by deeds. Hence, the testing of deeds is also the .testing of the essences

And if the noble verse were interpreted in accordance with its apparent sense and in independence of

the exposition of the Imam (A), even then the testing will have the above-mentioned sense, because the life in the present world and the creation of life and death by itself results in the distinctions that characterize good and evil acts. As to the creation of life, its significance is clear, and as to death, its significance in this relation also becomes clear when we know the ephemeral nature of worldly life and the necessity of transition from this transitory life which is, of course, accompanied with distinctions .arising from distinctions of deeds

Fear, Sincere Intention And Rightness Of Action

You should know that in this noble tradition the rightness and goodness of action is made to depend on two sublime bases, which also constitute the criteria of their perfection and wholeness. One of these is the fear and awe of God Almighty and the other is the sincerity of intention and purity of purpose. Now we have to explain the relation between these two principles and the perfection of action and its rightness .and rectitude

The fear and awe of God Almighty leads to the taqwa and piety of the souls and these result in greater effectiveness of deeds. To elaborate, as mentioned in the course of the exposition of earlier traditions, every act, good or evil, has an effect upon the soul. Now if the act is of the category of acts of devotion and worship, its effect is that of making the physical faculties subservient to the intellectual faculties, making the malakuti aspect of the self-dominant

.over its mulki aspect

As a result of it, physical nature is made subject to spirituality, until the soul reaches the stage of spiritual emotion and attains its essential goal. Every act that increases this effect and discharges this service in a better way is more rightful and more effective in attaining the essential goal. Also, everything that has a role in this effectiveness has also a role in the rightness of action. Largely, this is also the criterion of relative merit in acts and the famous following tradition also refers to this :point

أَفْضَلُ الأَعْمَالِ أَحْمَزُهَا.

(The best of deeds are those which are the most difficult.(١

These preliminaries show that taqwa purifies the souls from contaminations and obfuscations, and, obviously, if the tablet of the soul is free of the coverings of sins and clear of the obfuscations caused by them, the good actions are more effective- upon it and more conducive to the realization of the goal, thus better fulfilling the great secret purpose of devotional rites, which is the taming of corporeal nature, subjugation of mulk to malakut, and strengthening of the soul's active will power .((iradeh-ye fa'ileh-ye nafs

Hence, the fear of God, which has a thorough influence on the soul's taqwa, is one of the major agents of spiritual reform with an effective role in the rectitude of action and its beauty and perfection. This is because taqwa, besides being one of the reforming agents of the soul, also affects the influence of inward and outward human

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol. iv, p. ٩ -١

:actions and is the cause of their acceptability, as declared by God Almighty

(إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنْ الْمُتَّقِينَ.)

(Verily God accepts only from the God-fearing. (۵:۲۷

The second major factor in the rightness and perfection of actions which, in fact, is tantamount to their efficient force (in the same way as the awe and taqwa acquired from them is equivalent to the condition of their effectiveness and which, in fact, purify the receptor and remove the impediments). It is sincere intention and pure purpose on which depend the perfection and defectiveness of ‘ibadat (worships) and .their validity and invalidity

As much as the ‘ibadat are free from association with non-God and from adulteration of intention, to the same extent they are sincere and perfect. And nothing is as important in ‘ibadat as intention and its purity, for the relationship of intention to .‘ibadah is like that of the soul to the body and the spirit to the corporeal frame

In the same way as their physical form originates in the physical aspect of the self and its body, intention and their spirit originate from the self’s inward aspect and the heart. No worship is acceptable to God Almighty without sincere intention and unless it is free from the outward mulki riya’ (a kind of riya’ which the fuqaha’ (R) have .(mentioned) and shirk, which invalidate and nullify the outward parts (of an ibadah

And unless it is free from inward shirk, in whose presence although an ‘ibadah may be correct from the exoteric aspect

of the Shari'ah and fiqhi ordinances, it is not valid and acceptable to God Almighty from the esoteric aspect and from the viewpoint of the reality and secrets of worship. Hence there is no necessary relation between the (legal) validity of 'ibadah and its .acceptability, a point which has often been mentioned in the traditions

An exhaustive definition of 'shirk in 'ibadah' that encompasses all its levels is the inclusion of the good pleasure and satisfaction of anyone other than God, whether it is one's own self or someone else.' If it is for someone else's satisfaction and for other people, it is outward shirk and fiqhi riya'. If it is for one's own satisfaction (rida), it is hidden and inward shirk; this also invalidates the 'ibadah in view of the urafa and makes it unacceptable to God. Examples of it are offering the nightly prayer for increase in one's livelihood, giving sadaqah for safety from afflictions, or giving zakat for increase in one's wealth; that is, when one does these things for God Almighty in .order to seek these things from His grace

Although those 'ibadat are valid, and one who performs them is considered to have performed his duty and fulfilled the requirements of the Shari'ah, they do not amount to the worship of God Almighty, nor are they characterized with sincerity of intention and purity of purpose. Rather, this kind of 'ibadat are aimed to achieve mundane purposes and to seek the objects of carnal, mundane desires. Hence, the

.acts of such a person are not rightful

Similarly, if ‘ibadah is for the sake of the fear of hell and yearning for paradise, it is not sincerely for God and is devoid of sincere intention. Rather, it may be said that such acts of worship are purely for the sake of Satan and the carnal self. The good pleasure of God does not enter the intentions of a person performing such a kind of .ibadah in order to be considered even shirk

Rather he has worshipped solely the great idol, the mother of all idols, the idol of one’s carnal desire. However, God Almighty has accepted this kind of ibadah from us out of His expansive mercy and on account of our weakness, by allowing a degree of leniency; that is, He has bestowed upon it certain effects and attached certain favors to it so that if man should fulfill the outward conditions of its acceptance, and perform it with the presence of the heart, all those effects will follow and all the related .promises of reward shall be carried out

Such is the condition of the ‘ibadat of the slaves and mercenaries. But as to the ‘ibadah of free men (ahrar), performed for the love of God Almighty and to seek the attention given by that Sacred Essence to Its worshippers, the motive of fear of hell and yearning for paradise being absent in it, it is the first station of the awliya’ and .ahrar

There are other stations and

degrees for them, which escape description and lie outside the scope of this discourse. As long as the soul's attention is fixed on worship, worshipper, and the worshipped one, worship is not sincere. The heart must be vacated of every other thing and there should be nothing in it except God in order for worship to be sincere, as mentioned in a noble tradition of al-Kafi

قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (إلا مَنْ أَتَى اللهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيم.) قَالَ: القَلْبُ السَّلِيمُ الَّذِى يَلْقَى رَبَّهُ وَلَيْسَ فِيهِ أَحَدٌ سِوَاهُ. وَكُلُّ قَلْبٍ فِيهِ شِرْكٌ أَوْ شَكٌّ فَهُوَ سَاقِطٌ. وَإِنَّمَا أَرَادُوا الزُّهْدَ فِى الدُّنْيَا لِتَفْرَغَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِلآخِرَه.

Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah (the narrator of the earlier tradition) says, "I asked Imam al-Sadiq (A) about the utterance of God, the Exalted and the Glorious, in regard to the Day of Resurrection, 'The day when neither wealth nor sons shall profit except he who comes with a pure heart (۲۶: ۸۸-۸۹).' The Imam (A) replied, 'A pure heart is one that meets its Lord in a state in which there is none in it except Him.' Then he (A) added: 'Every heart in which there is shirk or doubt shall fail. Indeed, He has meant by it (the purity of heart) nothing except zuhd in regard to the world so that their hearts (may be made ready for the Hereafter.'(۱)

Of course, the heart which is occupied with non-God and contaminated with doubt and shirk - whether of the manifest (jali) or the concealed (khafi) kind - has

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.Al-Kulayni, op. cit., hadith No. ۵ -۱

no credibility in the sacred presence of the Lord. To the concealed kind of shirk .pertains reliance on means and dependence on anything other than God

It is even mentioned in tradition that changing the position of one's ring in order to remind one of something is also concealed shirk.(۱) To allow other-than-God to enter the heart is considered concealed shirk, and sincerity of intention (ikhlas al-niyyat) is expulsion of other-than God from His sacred abode (i.e. the heart). Similarly, there are various degrees of doubt (shakk), some of which should be reckoned as manifest and some as concealed, which are caused by the weakness of conviction and feebleness .of faith

Similarly, hesitation in matters is also on account of doubt. Of the stages of concealed doubt is changeability and absence of stability in tawhid. Therefore, true tawhid means the dropping of relations, limits and pluralities, even the pluralities relating to the Names and Attributes, and fixation in it is purity from doubt. The purity of heart .means absolute freedom from shirk and doubt

In the tradition, the phrase "He has meant by it nothing except zuhd..." is a reference to the fact that the ultimate goal of zuhd is that the heart should gradually become detached from the world and loathful toward it, with its attention turned to the real goal and the true object of all yearning. From the beginning part of the tradition it appears that the meaning of 'Hereafter' is the ultimate limit of the circle of existence and

p: ۵۵۸

The tradition appears in Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, in the chapter on the ahkam of dressing - ۱ .((ahkam al-malabis

.the ultimate destination. This is what 'Hereafter' means in its absolute sense

Accordingly, the world constitutes the complete circle of manifestation, and zuhd in regard to it necessarily entails purifying the heart of other-than-God. Hence even one who has other-than-God in his heart and is attached to others - whether they be corporeal, mulki matters, or spiritual ones relating to hereafterly forms, excellences and degrees, and everything other than God - is a man of the world, not zahid in regard to it, being deprived from the true Hereafter and the paradise of Divine communion, which is the highest of the levels of paradise, although he may possess other degrees of spiritual excellences and attain to the sublime levels of paradise in the same way as the people of the world differ in regard to possession of worldly .wealth and status but whose stations are far remote from those of the men of God

The Definition Of Ikhlas

You should know that various definitions have been suggested for ikhlas, to some of which that are prevalent among the people of the mystic path we shall briefly refer here. The honorable 'arif' and the wise wayfarer, Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari, :quddisa sirruh, says

الإخْلاصُ تَصْفِيَهُ العَمَلِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَوْبٍ.

.Ikhlas means purging action of all impurities

And the impurity mentioned here is a general one, including both that which arises from the desire to please oneself and other creatures. It is narrated from the great :Shaykh Baha'i that the people of the heart have offered various definitions for it

قِيلَ:

تَنْزيهُ العَملِ أنْ يكونَ لِغَير اللهِ فيهِ نَصيبٌ.

It has been said, “(Ikhlas means) keeping action free from other-than-God having a ”.role in it

.This definition is close to the former one

وقيلَ: أنْ لا يُريدَ عاملُهُ عليهِ عِوَضاً فى الدَّارَينِ.

And it has been said, “(Ikhlas means) that the performer of an action should not desire ”.any reward for it in the world and the Hereafter

And it has been narrated from the author of Ghara’ib al-bayan that the mukhlisun are those who worship God in such a way that they don’t see themselves in service nor do they take notice of the world or .its people, nor transcend the bounds of servitude in .their vision of Lordship

Hence when the devotee foregoes all gains and stakes in everything from the earth to the Throne (‘arsh), he comes to traverse the path of din, which is the path of service and devotion on which the soul does not take any notice of the events on account of its vision of the beauty of the Lord. This is the Din that God Almighty has chosen for Himself and cleared it from the taint of association with other-than-God, and He has :said

(أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ.)

(Lo, to God belongs sincere allegiance —al-din al-khalis—. (۳۹:۳

And ‘sincere religion’ is the light of pre-eternity (qidam) that appears after the disappearance of contingency (huduth) in the wilderness of resplendent glory and monism. It is as if God Almighty has invited His servants by indicating and signaling to them that they

should purify their souls from others and make them turn exclusively towards Him. And it has been narrated from al-Shaykh al-Muhaqqiq Muhyi al-Din al-'Arabi that he :said

أَلا ـ للهِ الـدّينُ الخـالِصُ عَن شَوْبِ الغَيرِيَّهِ وَالأَنـانِيَّهِ، لأَنَّکَ لِفَنائِکَ فيهِ بالكُلِّيَّهِ فَلا ذاتَ لَکَ وَلا صِفَهَ وَلا فِعلَ وَلا دينَ وَإلا لَما خَلُصَ الدّينُ بِالحَقيقهِ فَلا يَكونُ للهِ.

Lo, to God belongs sincere allegiance,' free from the taints of otherness and egoism.' And that your extinction in Him should be total, the Essence; the Attributes, the Acts and the din should cease to be relevant for you. Lo, until the allegiance is not purified .by Reality, it will not belong to God

Until the traces of servitude ('ubudiyyah), otherness (ghayriyyah) and egoism (ananiyyah) remain and as long as there is a worshipper and the worshipped one, worship, sincerity, and din, there remain the taints of otherness and egoism, and this is regarded as shirk by the urafa. The worship of the sincere ones is the imprint of the manifestations (tajalliyat) of the Beloved and nothing passes through their hearts .except the Essence of the One God

And although the horizons of possibility (imkan) and necessity (wujub) have been joined for them and they have attained proximity to the Essence (tadalli-ye dhati) and absolute nearness to the Real (dunuww al-mutlaq al-haqiqi) and the traces of otherness have been completely wiped out, they still perform the duties of servantship. And their servitude is not through reflection and thought, but through manifestation - a point indicated by the

.(prayer of the Messenger of Allah (S) on the night of his heavenly ascent (mi'raj

Ikhlas Is Subsequent To Action

You should know that that which is said in the noble tradition, that

الإبْقَاءُ عَلى العَمَلِ حَتَّى يَخْلُصَ أَشَدُّ مِنَ العَمَلِ.

To persevere in an action until it becomes sincere is more difficult than the action ,itself

is meant to encourage man to exercise care and diligence in that which he does, both at the time of its performance and after it. For it sometimes happens that man carries out an action faultlessly and without any shortcoming and performs it without riya' or 'ujb; but after the action he becomes afflicted with riya' through mentioning it, as :pointed out in the following noble hadith of al-Kari

عَنْ أبى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: الإبْقَاءُ عَلَى العَمَلِ أَشَدُّ مِنَ العَمَلِ. قَالَ: وَمَا الإبْقَاءُ عَلَى العَمَلِ؟ قَالَ: يَصِلُ الرَّجُلُ بِصِلَةٍ وَيُنْفِقُ نَفَقَةً لِلهِ وَحْدَهُ لا شَرِيكَ لَهُ فَتُكْتَبُ لَهُ سِرّاً ثُمَّ يَذْكُرُهَا فَتُمْحَى فَتُكْتَبُ لَهُ عَلانِيَةً، ثُمَّ يَذْكُرُهَا فَتُمْحَى وَتُكْتَبُ لَهُ رِياءً.

Imam al-Baqir (A) said, "Perseverance in an action is more difficult than the act itself." He was asked, "What is meant by perseverance in action?" He replied, "A man does some kindness to a relative or expends something for the sake of God, Who is One and has no partner. Thereupon the reward of a good deed performed secretly is written for him. Later, he mentions it to someone, and that which was written earlier is wiped out, and instead the reward of a good deed performed openly is written for

him. Later, when he makes a mention of it again, the vice of riya' is written for him ((instead of the reward written earlier).”(1)

Man is never secure from the evil of Satan and his self until the end of his life. He must not imagine that once he has performed an act solely for the sake of God, without desire for the good pleasure of creatures having played any role in it, the purity of his act shall remain secure from the evil of the vicious self. Should he fail to exercise care and vigilance, the self may prompt him to make a mention of it or, as sometimes .happens, to express it in the way of a subtle hint

For instance, wishing to impress people about his nightly prayers, the subtle machinations of the self may prompt him to pass a hint by speaking about the good or bad weather conditions at daybreak or about supplications or the call for prayer, thus making his acts invalid and unworthy. Man must keep a watch over himself, like a kind physician or nurse, and not let the rebellious self get out of control; for a moment of neglect may give it the opportunity to break its reins and lead man into ignominy and perdition. Hence, in all conditions he must take refuge in God Almighty from the evil of :Satan and the carnal self

(إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّی.)

Surely the self of man incites to evil - except in

.Al -Kulayni at-Kafi, kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr, bab al-riya', hadith No. ۱۶ -۱

(as much as my Lord had mercy. (١٢:٥٣

And it should be known to you that purification of intention from all levels of shirk, riya' and other things, constant vigilance over it, and its perseverance in purity make up a greatly difficult as well as an important task. Rather, some degrees of it are not attainable by anyone except the sincere awliya' of Allah. This is because intention is the efficient motive of action and is subject to other goals. These goals are in turn subject to the spiritual traits that make up man's inward essence and spiritual character. If someone possesses the love of office and position and this love becomes part of his spiritual makeup and character, the end of his desires is to reach that goal and the actions that originate from him are subject to that goal; his motive being the same sought-after object of his spirit, the actions that originate from him are directed .to reaching the goal sought

As long as this love remains in his heart, his acts cannot be sincere, and one whose spiritual character and make-up are characterized by self-love and egoism his ultimate goal and end is attainment of selfish satisfactions, which are also the motive of his acts, regardless of whether his acts are directed to mundane goals or such otherworldly ends as the houris, palaces, gardens and bounties of the next life. Rather, as long as egoism, self-seeking and egotism are there, even if he takes a step for the

acquisition of mystic knowledge and spiritual excellences, these are sought for selfish ends, self-seeking, not God-seeking, being their aim. And it is obvious that self-seeking and God-seeking cannot go together. Rather, if God is sought for the sake of .the self, the ultimate end and goal is the self and the ego

Thus it is evident that the absolute purification of intention from shirk is a great task that cannot be achieved by every one, and the defectiveness and excellence of deeds is subject to the defectiveness and perfection of intentions, for intention is the efficient and malakuti form of action, as hinted above. The noble tradition also refers :to this point where it says

وَالنِّيَّهُ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ العَمَلِ. ألا وَإنَّ النِّيَّهَ هِىَ العَمَلُ.

And intention is superior to action, or, rather, intention is the complete reality of act .itself

And there is no exaggeration involved in this, as some have suggested; rather, it is based on fact, for intention is the complete form of action and its essence itself, the wholesomeness and corruption, the excellence and defectiveness of acts depending .upon it

Accordingly, a single act may, on account of the intention that underlies it, at times imply respect and at times insult. Sometimes it may be perfect and sometimes defective. Sometimes it may belong to the highest level of spiritual sublimity, possessing a beautiful, blessed form. Sometimes it may belong to the lower spiritual .realm and possess a frightful and odious form

The apparent form of the salat of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib

A) does not differ outwardly in regard to its elements and conditions from that of a) certain hypocrite; but whereas for the former it is a means of spiritual ascent toward God (mi'raj ila Allah) and has the highest spiritual form, for the latter it is a means of descent to hell and its spiritual form is incomparably black due to the intensity of .darkness

Because of a few loaves of bread of barley given away by the House of Inerrancy, i.e. The Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt (A), for the sake of God, God Almighty sent down several verses in their praise. An ignorant person may be led to think that two or three days of hunger and giving away one's food to the poor is a matter of importance, whereas such kind of acts may be performed by anybody and are of not much consequence. Their significance lies in the purity of their (i.e. the Ahl al-Bayt's) purpose and the sincerity of their intention. It is the power and elegance of the spirit of their action, .coming forth from their pure hearts that gives their action so much significance

The outward appearance of the Noble Prophet (S) was not much different from that of other people. Hence, often when he (S) was sitting with a group of people and some strangers from among the Arab Bedouins came to meet him (S), they would ask, "Which one of you is the Messenger?" That which distinguished the Messenger (S) from others is the power

and elegance of the spirit of that Master, not his blessed body or his noble frame. In the rational sciences, it is demonstrated that a thing's thingness depends on its form, .not on its matter

Rather, a definition based on species is exhaustive, and it is defective when based on genus and species, because intermingling with that which is strange and foreign to a thing is inimical to its reality, definition, and wholeness, and matter and genus are foreign and strange to its reality, which lies in its form, actuality, and species. Hence, the total reality of acts is that of their forms and their malakuti dimension, .represented by intention

This discussion shows that that which Imam al-Sadiq (A) says in this noble tradition is, firstly, in view of the form of action and its matter. What he says is that their formal aspect supersedes their material aspect and that, therefore, intention supersedes action, in the same way as spirit is superior to body. And this does not necessitate the validity of an act devoid of intention and the possibility of a body devoid of spirit. Rather, it is the association of intention with action and the attachment of spirit to body that makes action and body what they are. These two are compounds of intention and action, body and spirit and the formal, malakuti aspect of each is :superior to its material, mulki aspect. And this is the meaning of the famous tradition

نِيَّةُ المَرْءِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ.

The intention of the

(man of faith is better than his act.(1)

Secondly, that which the Imam (A) says is in view of the dissolution of action in intention, of the mulk in the malakut, and manifestation (mazhar) in the manifest (zahir). Hence he (A) states:

أَلا وَإِنَّ النِّيَّةَ هِيَ العَمَلُ.

Lo, verily intention is act itself.

Apart from intention, there is nothing that is involved and the totality of act is merged in intention; action has no independent reality of its own. Thereafter, he (A) cites the utterance of God Almighty as witness:

(قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ.)

(Say: 'Everyone acts according to his character' (shakilatihi) (17:84)

Acts are subservient to the soul's character (shakilah) and although the soul's character is constituted by its inward form and the traits (malakat) inherent in it, intentions constitute its outward character.

It may be said that spiritual traits constitute the soul's primary character and intentions, to which actions are subservient, makeup its secondary character. Hence, the statement of the Imam (A) that shakilah is niyyah.

This shows that the way to the purification of action from all kinds of shirk, riya', etc., is only through the reform of the soul and its malakat, for it is the fountainhead of all the reforms and the source of all the excellences and degrees of perfection. Hence if man expels the love of the world from his heart by means of austerities and exercises based on knowledge and action, the world will cease to be his ultimate goal and his acts will be purged of the biggest

1- Al -Kulayni at-Kafi, kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr, bab al-niyyah, hadith No.2.

shirk, which is the desire to attract the attention of the world's people and to attain respect in their eyes. When that happens, he will be the same in solitude and .company, inwardly and outwardly

To the extent that he succeeds in purging his heart of self-love, through spiritual austerities, the love of God shall enter it to the same extent and it shall also be purified of latent shirk. And as long as self-love remains in the heart and man remains in the oppressive habitat of the self, he is not a wayfarer toward God (musafir ila Allah); rather, he is one of those who cling to the earth (mukhalladun ila al-'ard). The first step in the journey toward God is abandonment of self-love and crushing the head of egoism under one's foot. And there are some who say that one of the :meanings of the noble verse

(وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ.)

Whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then (death overtakes him, his wage will have fallen on God. (۴:۱۰۰

is that if someone leaves the habitat of the self to migrate to God and sets out on a spiritual journey, and thereafter he encounters complete annihilation (fana' al-tamm), his reward lies with God, the Exalted. And it is obvious that such a wayfarer deserves no reward except the vision (mushahadah) of that Sacred Essence and entry into His :court. These words express their sentiments

در ضمیرما نمی

گنجد غیر دوست کس

هر دو عالم را به دشمن ده که ما را دوست بس

None except the Beloved has a place in our heart, Give both the worlds to the enemy, .for the Beloved suffices us

(Twenty–First Hadith: Thankfulness (Shukr

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلى حُجَّةِ الفِرْقَهِ وَإِمَامِهِمْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ، كَرَّمَ اللهُ وَجْهَهُ، عَنْ حُمَيْدِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ، عَنِ الحَسَنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سُمَاعَهَ، عَنْ وُهَيْبِ بْنِ حَفْصٍ، عَنْ أَبِى بَصِيرٍ، عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عِنْدَ عَائِشَهَ لَيْلَتَهَا، فَقَالَتْ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ لِمَ تُتْعِبُ نَفْسَکَ وَقَدْ غَفَرَ اللهُ لَکَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ؟ فَقَالَ: يَا عَائِشَهُ، أَلا أَكُونُ عَبْداً شَكُوراً؟ قَالَ: وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَقُومُ عَلَى أَطْرَافِ أَصَابِعِ رِجْلَيْهِ. فَأَنْزَلَ اللهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى: (طه * مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْکَ القُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى.)

Through my continuous sanad going back to the proof of the sect and its leader, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (Q) from Humayd ibn Ziyad, from al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Sama'ah, from Wuhayb ibn Hafs, from Abu Bash, from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said: One night that the Messenger of Allah (S) was with 'A'ishah, she said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, why do you exhaust yourself when God has forgiven you your former and latter sins?" The Prophet (S) replied, "O 'A'ishah, shouldn't I be a grateful servant?" The Imam (A) added: The Messenger of Allah (S) used to stand on ,the toes of his feet (in prayer in the night) and so God, the Glorious and the Exalted

sent down the verse: “Taha. We have not sent down the Qur’an upon thee to cause (thee hardship. (۲۰:۱)”(۱)

Exposition

The words قَـدْ غَفَرَ اللهُ (God has forgiven thee) refer to the following utterance of God Almighty in Surat al-Fath:

(إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَکَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا. لِيَغْفِرَ لَکَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْکَ وَيَهْدِيَکَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا.)

Surely, We have given thee a manifest victory that God may forgive thee thy former (and thy latter sins. (۴۸:۱-۲

The ulama (R) have suggested various explanations for this noble verse so as to reconcile it with the Noble Prophet’s infallibility (‘ismah). Here we will cite some of those explanations mentioned by the marhum Allamah Majlisi (M). Thereafter we will briefly mention that which the ‘urafa’ have said in this regard in accordance with the .teachings of the mystic path

Marhum Majlisi says: The Shi’ah have offered various views regarding the explanation (tawil) of this verse. According to one of these, the ‘sins’ (dhunub; singular dhanb) mentioned there mean the sins of the Ummah which are forgiven by the Prophet’s intercession. These sins of the Ummah have been attributed to him because of the connection that exists between him and it. This possibility is supported :(by the following narration of Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar from Imam al Sadiq (A

قَـالَ: سَـأَلَهُ رَجُـلٌ عَنْ هَـذِهِ الآيَهِ فَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: وَاللهِ مَا كَانَ لَهُ ذَنْبٌ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ سُـبْحَانَهُ ضَـمِنَ لَهُ أنْ يَغْفِرَ ذُنُوبَ شِـيعَتِهِ عَلَى مَا تَقَدَّمَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.

Mufaddal says: A man asked the Imam concerning this verse. He

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۱- Al-Kafi, ii, “kitab al-’iman wa al-kufr” “bab al-shukr,” hadith no.۲.

replied, “By Allah, he (i.e. the Prophet) had no sin of his own. However, Allah, subhanahu, has insured that He would forgive the sins, whatever they have ”.(committed, of those who followed ‘Ali (shi’at ‘Ali

وَرَوَى عُمَرُ بْنُ يَزِيدَ عَنْهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَا كَانَ لَهُ ذَنْبٌ وَلا هَمَّ بِذَنْبٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ حَمَّلَهُ ذُنُوبَ شِيعَتِهِ ثُمَّ غَفَرَهَا لَهُ.

Umar ibn Yazid narrates that Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, “He had not committed any sin,‘ not even intended to commit any. However, God made him bear the burden of the (sins of his followers and then forgave them on his account.”(١)

This author says: This explanation has a significant basis in the teaching of the ‘urafa’ and it would not be without benefit to mention it briefly. You should know that it has been proved, in the place proper to such a proof, that the unchanging essence (‘ayn al-thabit) of the Perfect Man (insan al-kamil) is the manifestation (mazhar; pl. mazahir) of the Greatest of Divine Names (ism Allah al- a’zam), which is the prototype (imam) of all prototypal names. The essences (a’yan) of all other existents subsist in the shadow of the essence of the Perfect Man on the level of knowledge and the world of essences, and exist therein on the level of being and the world of realization .((‘alam al-tahaqquq

Hence, the essences contained in the entire realm of existence are the manifestation of the essence of the Perfect Man, and all the existents are manifestations of his beauty and glory in the

.Bihar al- anwar, xvii, ۷۶ -۱

world of manifestation. Accordingly, every shortcoming that occurs in the world of exteriorization and every sin that appears in the mazahir (manifestations), whether on the level of creation (takwin) or on the level of volitional action (tashri'), is attributable to the zahir (i.e. that which is manifested through the rnazahir) in accordance with the necessary relation between zahir and mazhar. This attribution is not metaphorical, but literal and factual. It is the reality of this relation, which is pointed out in the following verses:

(وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَیِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

(Whatever evil visits thee it of thy self. (۴:۷۹

(قُلْ کُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.)

(Say: Everything it from God. (۴:۷۸

And reference to this matter occurs a lot in the Noble Prophet's traditions:

نَحْنُ السَّابِقُونَ الآخِرُونَ.

(We are the foremost and the last ones.(۱

آدَمُ وَمَنْ تَحْتَهُ تَحْتَ لِوَائِی یَوْمَ القِیَامَهِ.

Adam and whoever that came after him shall stand under my standard on the Day of Resurrection.(۲)

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللهُ نُورِی.

(The first thing that God created was my light.(۳

سَبَّحْنَا فَسَبَّحَتِ المَلائِکَهُ وَقَدَّسْنَا فَقَدَّسَتِ المَلائِکَهُ.

Before Adam was created) we glorified (God) and following us the angels glorified) (Him We extolled (His) sanctity and following us the angels called Him Holy.(۴)

لَوْلانَا مَا عُرِفَ اللهُ.

(Had we not existed, God would not have been known.(۵

لَوْلاکَ لَمَا خَلَقْتُ الأَفْلاکَ.

(God said to the Prophet) Had you not been, I would not have created the heavens.(۶)

نَحْنُ وَجْهُ اللهِ.

(We are the face of God.(۷

It is stated in a tradition that "the Messenger of Allah (S) (in relation to the community of the faithful) has the position

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۱- Bihar al- anwar, xxiv, ۱-۹.
۲- Bihar al- anwar, xvi, ۴۰۲.
۳- Bihar al- anwar, xv, ۳ ff.
۴- Al-Saduq, 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida, i, ۲۶۳.
۵- Bihar al- anwar, xxvi, ۲۴۷.
۶- 'Ilm al-yaqin, i, ۳۸۱.
۷- Al-Saduq, Kitab al-tawhid, ۱۵۰.

of the tree's trunk; the Imams of Guidance (A) are its branches; their followers (shi'ah) are like the leaves of the tree."(1)

Hence, the beauty of the sacred tree of wilayah is manifested through the mazahir. Should one of the mazahir suffer a shortcoming that will affect the sacred tree.

Hence, the sins of all the existents are the sins of the Absolute Master (al-wali al-mutlaq), and God Almighty, with His encompassing mercy and all-inclusive forgiveness, has showered His grace upon the Noble Prophet (S), declaring, 'The sins of the former people and the sins of those to come will be covered by My encompassing mercy and the entire realm of being shall attain its ultimate felicity through your shafa'ah (intercession), and:

وَآخِرُ مَنْ يَشْفَعُ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

(The last to intercede is the most merciful of the merciful ones (i.e. God).

According to this teaching, the noble verse at hand fulfills the promise given in another verse, which says:

(وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى.)

(And thy Lord shall soon give thee, and thou shalt be satisfied. (93:5)

And it has been said of this verse that it is:

أَرْجَى آيَةٍ فِى الْقُرْآنِ.

(The most hope-giving of verses in the Qur'an.(2)

Hence according to this teaching 'the former sins' may possibly mean the sins of the earlier ummahs (umam) for all the ummahs are part of the Ummah of this sacred essence (the Prophet) and all the calls (da'wahs) of the prophets represent invitation to the ultimate Shari'ah, being the mazahir of al-Wali al-Mutlaq, and 'Adam and whoever that came after him' are

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۱- Al-Mufid, al- Amali, majlis no. ۲۸, p. ۲۴۵.

۲- Al-Tabrisi, Majma' al-bayan, x, ۵۰۵.

.the leaves of the tree of wilayah

The second explanation is the one given by al-Sayyid al-Murtada (R). He says that dhanb is a masdar (verbal noun) and it may permissibly be referred or adjoined to the fall or maful. Here it has been related (in the construct phrase dhanbika) to the maf'ul. Hence, the verse (۴۸:۲) means, "The former sins of theirs against thee in preventing ".thee from entering Makkah and al-Masjid al-Haram

The meaning of maghfirah or ghufran (which also means 'covering) here, according to this explanation, is the abolishment and removal of the persecution that he (the Prophet [S]) faced at the hands of his enemies. The verse then means: "On the occasion of the victory and through it God would end and cover the humiliation inflicted upon you, and with the conquest of Makkah you would soon enter the city triumphantly." Accordingly, ghufran has been made the recompense for jihad and the .benefit of victory

The Sayyid (M) says: If maghfirah here is taken to mean the forgiving of sins, a reasonable meaning cannot be derived from the verse, for forgiveness of sins has no relation whatsoever with victory, nor can it be considered to be the object and benefit there is nothing objectionable in taking it to , مَا تَقَدَّمَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَof victory. As to the phrase mean "whatever of the atrocities that have been afflicted on you and your people in ".the past

Thirdly, the verse is explained to mean, "If you have committed a sin in

the past or in case you commit any hereafter, I shall indeed forgive you." This is a conditional proposition (of the type 'If A then B) and it is not necessary that its two .sides should be factually true

Fourthly, by 'sin' here is meant omission of mustahabbat (supererogatory duties), for the Prophet (S) never defaulted in performing the wajibat (obligatory duties). And it is possible that due to his elevated and exalted station, that which is not considered to .be sin for others may be considered sin in relation to him

The fifth explanation is that this verse is intended to glorify the Prophet (S) and is :equivalent to a eulogy, as when one says

غَفَرَ اللهُ لَکَ.

:Sixthly, al-Majlisi says

وَقَدْ رَوَی الصَّدُوقُ فِی العُیُونِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِیِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الجَهْمِ قَالَ: حَضَرْتُ مَجْلِسَ المَأْمُونِ وَعِنْدَهُ الرِّضَا عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فَقَالَ لَهُ المَأْمُونُ: یَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ أَلَیْسَ مِنْ قَوْلِکَ أَنَّ الأَنْبِیَاءَ مَعْصُومُونَ؟ قَالَ: بَلَی. قَالَ: فَمَا مَعْنَی قَوْلِ اللهِ، (لِیَغْفِرَ لَکَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.) قَالَ لِلرِّضَا عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: لَمْ یَکُنْ أَحَدٌ عِنْدَ مُشْرِکِی مَکَّهَ أَعْظَمَ ذَنْباً مِنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ لأَنَّهُمْ کَانُوا یَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ ثَلاثَمِائَهٍ وَسِتِّینَ صَنَماً. فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ بِالدَّعْوَهِ إِلَی کَلِمَهِ الإِخْلاصِ کَبُرَ ذَلِکَ عَلَیْهِمْ وَعَظُمَ. قَالُوا (أَجَعَلَ الْآلِهَهَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَیْءٌ عُجَابٌ. وَانطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَی آلِهَتِکُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَیْءٌ یُرَادُ. مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِی الْمِلَّهِ الْآخِرَهِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ.) فَلَمَّا فَتَحَ اللهُ تَعَالَی

عَلى نَبِيِّهِ مَكَّهَ قالَ لَهُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ: (إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا. لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا.) عِنْدَ مُشْرِكِي أَهْلِ مَكَّهَ، بِدُعَائِكَ إِلَى تَوْحِيدِ اللهِ فِيمَا تَقَدَّمَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ لأَنَّ مُشْرِكِي مَكَّهَ أَسْلَمَ بَعْضُهُمْ وَخَرَجَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَنْ مَكَّهَ، وَمَنْ بَقِيَ مِنْهُمْ لَمْ يَقْدِرْ عَلَى إِنْكَارِ التَّوْحِيدِ عَلَيْهِ، إِذَا دَعَا النَّاسَ إِلَيْهِ فَصَارَ ذَنْبُهُ عِنْدَهُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ، مَغْفُوراً بِظُهُورِهِ عَلَيْهِمْ. فَقَالَ المَأْمُونُ: لِلهِ دَرُّكَ يَا أَبَا الحَسَنِ.

Al Saduq in 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida has reported with his isnad from 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm that he said: I was present in al-Ma'mun's gathering when al-Rida (A) was also with him. There al-Ma'mun said to him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah, don't you claim that the prophets are secure from error (ma'sumun)?" He replied, "Yes." Al-Ma'mun said, "Then what is the meaning of the utterance of God:

(لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.)

Surely, We have given thee a manifest victory) that God may forgive thee thy former) and thy latter sins.

Al-Rida (A) replied, "The polytheists of Makkah did not consider anyone a greater sinner than the Messenger of Allah (S) because they worshipped instead of Allah three hundred and sixty idols. When the Prophet (S) came to them with the call to pure monotheism (ikhlas), it appeared to them as a monstrosity, and they declared: What, has he made the gods One God? This is indeed an odd thing... Go! Be steadfast to your gods; this is

a thing to be desired. We have not heard of this in the last religion, this is surely an (invention. (۳۸:۵-۷

When God Almighty opened Makkah to His Prophet (S) He said to him, 'O Muhammad! Surely, We have opened for thee a manifest opening, that God may forgive thee what the polytheists of Makkah regarded as thy former and latter 'sins' on account of thy call to the Unity of God.' Some of the polytheists of Makkah had embraced Islam and some had left Makkah, and those who remained there had no, power to repudiate the Prophet's call to tawhid. In this way that which was the Prophet's sin in their eyes came to be condoned by means of his domination over them." Thereat al-Ma'mun (said, "You are wonderful, O Abu al-Hasan!"(۱

This writer says: This was the sixth explanation of the blessed verse that occurs in the noble hadith. According to it the meaning of 'sin' here is that which appeared to the .polytheists as sin in conformity with their corrupt claims

A Mystical Interpretation

You should know that there is an interpretation of the noble verse based on the teachings of the gnostics and the people of the path of the heart. In order to describe it, it is necessary to mention what they call the 'Threefold Openings' (or the 'threefold victories', futuhat al-thalathah). Fath in their teaching means the opening of the doors of gnosis and gnostic experience or. the wayfarer by God after that these doors have remained closed and locked

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.Bihar al-'anwar, xvii, ۷۳-۷۶, cf. 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida, i, ۲۰۲, bab ۱۵ -۱

.upon him

So long as man remains in the dark abode of the self and tied to its attachments, all the doors of gnosis and gnostic experience remain locked upon him. But as soon as he comes out of this gloomy habitat by means of the force of austerities and the lights of guidance, and leaves behind the stages of the self, the door of the heart is opened upon him and gnostic truths manifest themselves in his heart, and he attains to the 'station of the heart' (maqam al-qalb). This stage is called fath al-qarib (the nearer opening), for the first of the openings is the nearest of them. It is this fath that is :referred to in this utterance of God Almighty

(نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ.)

(help from God and a nigh opening. (۶۱:۱۳...

Of course, it is with God's help and assistance and with the guiding light and .magnetism of that Sacred Essence that this and other openings take place

However, as long as the wayfarer remains in the realm of the heart ('alam al-qalb) and is subject to the rituals and duties of the heart, the door of the Attributes and Names remains closed and locked upon him. When, thereafter, the irradiations of the Names and Attributes lead to the dissolution of the 'alam al-qalb and when those irradiations bring the heart's attributes and excellences to extinction, that which .(occurs is the fath al-mubin (the manifest opening

Thereat the door of the Names and Attributes is opened upon the

wayfarer, the earlier rituals of the self (nafs) and the latter ones of the heart (qalb) becoming effaced and covered (maghfur) by the covering grace (ghaffariyyat wasattariyyat) of the Names. Hence, they say that to this refers the utterance of God, :the Exalted

(إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَکَ فَتْحًا مُبِینًا. لِیَغْفِرَ لَکَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.)

Surely, We have given thee a manifest victory that God may forgive thee thy former (and thy latter sins. (۴۸:۱-۲

That is, We have opened for thee the manifest opening to the realm of the Names and Attributes, so that thy sins, relating to the earlier station of the self and the latter station of the heart, are covered by the covering grace of the Divine Names. And this is the opening of the door of wilayah. As long as the wayfarer is behind the curtain of the pluralities of the Names (katharat al-asmai) and the particularities of the Attributes (ta'ayyunat al-sifati), the doors to the irradiations of the Essence are locked .upon him

But when he receives the irradiations of the Essence of the One, all the rituals relating to the realms of khalq and amr become extinct, submerging the devotee in essential synthesis, and the fath al-mutlaq (the absolute opening) is attained. Thereupon, the absolute sin (dhanb al-mutlaq) is enveloped (maghfur) and the essential sin (dhanb al-dhati), which is the source of all sins, is covered by the irradiations of the One.

وُجُودُکَ ذَنْبٌ لا یُقَاسُ بِهِ ذَنْبٌ.

Your existence is a sin to which no

(other) sin is comparable.

And, they say, it is to this fath that the following utterance of God, the Exalted, alludes:

(إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ.)

(When comes the help of God and the opening. (١١٠:١)

Hence, it is with fath al-qarib that the doors to the heart's gnosis are opened and the sins relating to the (carnal) self (dhunub al-nafsiyyah) become forgiven. With fath al-mubin the doors of wilayah and Divine irradiations are opened and the remaining traces of the earlier sins of the self and the latter sins of the heart are forgiven. And with fath al-mutlaq the door is opened to the irradiations of the Divine Essence and the absolute essential sin is forgiven.

It should be known that fath al-qarib and fath al-mubin are something, which the awliya; prophets, and 'urafa' share with others; but fath al-mutlaq is a station that is exclusively and ultimately theirs, and should anyone succeed in attaining it, it is only through the mediation of those elevated spirits.

This discourse reveals that there are various levels of sin and sinfulness. Some of them are considered virtues for the virtuous but are sins for the immaculate. It is reported that the Noble Messenger (S) stated:

لَيُرَانُ - لَيُغَانُ - عَلَى قَلْبِى، وَإِنِّى لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ فِى كُلِّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

In order that my heart should not gather rust, I seek the forgiveness of God seventy times a day.(١)

This rusting may be attention to plurality, although it may be on the level of passing, stray thoughts. And it is mentioned in

١- Sahih Muslim, "kitabal-dhikr'," ٤١; al-Shaykh al-Bahai, al-'Arba'in, in the exposition of hadith no. ٢٢, with the words, "hundred times" (mi'at marrah)

the hadith that the Messenger of God (S) would not leave any gathering without seeking God's forgiveness twenty-five times.(1)

These traditions show that istighfar is not solely limited to such sins as are contrary to ismah (inerrancy), and 'dhanb' and 'maghfirah' here (in the context of the prophets and awliya') do not have their ordinarily understood signification. Therefore, this noble verse is not contradictory to the Prophet's elevated spiritual station; rather, it affirms and confirms it.

This is because seeking forgiveness for the sins related necessarily to the various stages of spiritual development are a necessary aspect of spiritual wayfaring and ascent to the heights of human perfection, since every being that exists in this world is the offspring of this corporeal and physical realm and possesses all its accompanying mulki, animal and human functions, some of these potentially and some of these in actuality.

Hence, should anyone want to make the journey from this realm to the other realm and from there to the realm of Divine proximity, he should pass through all the intermediary phases and stages. And whenever he attains to a higher stage, he is forgiven the sins of the preceding stage, until he attains to the ultimate station where all his sins are forgiven under the irradiations of the Essence of the One.

Thereat, the existential sin (dhanb al-wujudi), which is the source and fountainhead of all sins and sinfulness, is covered and effaced under the shadow of the Majesty of the One. This is the highest

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۱- Safinat al-Bihar, ii, ۳۲۲.

point in the ascent of a being towards perfection. It is here that the station of 'death' and complete annihilation is achieved. And therefore when the noble verse (إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ) was revealed, the Noble Messenger (S) said, "This surah is the news of my death." And God knows best.(١)

The Reality Of Shukr

You should know that thankfulness means appreciation of the ni'mah (favor, blessing, bounty) provided by the Provider (Mun'im) and the appearance of the effects of this appreciation in the heart, on the tongue, and in bodily acts and movements. As to the heart, the effects there are of such nature as humility, awe, love and the like. As to the tongue, the effects there appear as praise and glorification. As to the bodily members, the effects consist of obedience, the use of the bodily members for the good pleasure of the Mun'im, and the like. According to al-Raghib:

الشُّكْرُ تَصَوُّرُ النِّعْمَهِ وَإِظْهَارُهَا.

(Thankfulness (shukr) is the contemplation of the ni'mah and its expression.(٢)

It has been said that shukr is the (partial) inverse of kashr, meaning kashf (uncovering, discovery), and its antonym is kufr, which means forgetfulness and concealing of ni'mah. Dabbah shakir' (grateful animal) is one, which expresses the appreciation of its master and provider by its fatness and robustness. It has also been said that its origin is 'aynun shakra, shakra here meaning mumtali'ah (full).

Accordingly, shukr means being full of the mention of the Mun'im (Provider). Shukr is of three kinds: the shukr of the heart, which is the

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١- Tafsir Nur al-thaqalayn, v, ۶۸۹.

٢- Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat fi gharib al-Qur'an, p. ۲۶۵.

contemplation of ni'mah; the shukr of the tongue, which is praise of the Mun'im; and the shukr of all other bodily members, which is heedful observance of the ni'mah as it .(deserves to be observed (i.e. recognized, and used for the purpose proper to it

The confirmed gnostic Khwajah 'Abd Allah Ansari says, "Shukr is a name for the knowledge (marifah) or ni'mah, for it is the means of knowing the Mun'im." The :learned interpreter of his work says

The contemplation of ni'mah as belonging to the Mun'im and the knowledge that it is from Him is shukr itself. It has been narrated that Hadrat Dawud (David) (A) said, "O Lord! How can I thank Thee, for my thankfulness is another bounty (ni'mah) of Thee that itself requires thanksgiving!" God revealed to him: "O Dawud, when you have ".known that every ni'mah that you enjoy is from Me, you have thanked Me

This author says: That which these scholars have said is based on some lack of precision, for shukr is not the heart's knowledge per se or expression of it by the means of the tongue or bodily acts. Rather, it is a psychical state (halat al-nafsaniyyah) which itself results from the knowledge of the Mun'im. The acts of the heart and the body are the fruits of this state. What some scholars have said is close to this, although their statements too are not totally free of loose thinking. They have :said

It should be known that shukr is compensating for ni'mah

:through word, deed and intention. It rests on three supports

Firstly, the knowledge (ma'rifah) of the Mun'im and the attributes befitting Him, as well as the knowledge of ni'mah as ni'mah per se. This knowledge does not become perfect unless one understands that all the apparent and hidden bounties are from God Almighty and that it is His Sacred Essence that is the real provider. All the means .and intermediaries, whatever they are, are subject to His law and command

Secondly, it is a state which is the result of this knowledge, which consists of humility, awe, and delight for the bounty as a gift that indicates the Mun'im's care and attention for you. Its sign is that you should not be delighted by the world except for .something that causes nearness to God

Thirdly, it is action that results from this state; for when this state appears in the heart it produces an impulse for action aimed to achieve nearness to God. That action is related to the heart, tongue and other members. As to the heart, its action consists of the veneration, praise, and glorification of the Provider, the contemplation of His creation, His acts, the effects of His grace, and His beneficence towards all His creatures. As to the tongue, its action consists of the expression of that beneficence through praising, glorifying and extolling God and declaring Divine unity, as well as through, discharging the duty of al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar and other duties. As to the

bodily members, their thanksgiving action lies in using the outward and inward bounties in obedience, worship and in preventing sin against God and violation of His commands. Thus the eye should be used for studying His creation, reading His scripture, and teaching the traditional sciences of the prophets and the awsiya' (A). (Similarly, for the other bodily members.(۱)

Ignorance And Ingratitude

You should know that shukr for the inward and outward bounties of God Almighty is one of the obligatory duties of servantship and creaturehood, which everyone must attempt to fulfill to the extent of his capacity, although no creature can adequately fulfill its obligation of thanking God Almighty. The ultimate limit of thankfulness is the knowledge of the incapacity to satisfy it fully, in the same way as the ultimate limit of servantship is the realization of the incapacity of fulfilling its demands - and hence the Noble Messenger (S) confessed to his incapacity, although none of the existents has attempted to discharge the duties of servantship and gratitude to the extent of that holy master -because the perfection or inadequacy of gratitude is subject to the gnosis of the Mumin and the knowledge of His bounties. (Since this gnosis and knowledge are never complete), no one can satisfy the rights of gratitude.

The servant becomes fully thankful (shakur) when he knows the relation of creation to the Creator, and has gnosis of the entire spread of Divine beneficence, from its beginning to end, of the interrelations of the bounties with each other as

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۱- This is a summary of al-Ghazili's discourse from al-Fayd al-Kashani's al-Mahajjat al-bayda', vii, ۱۴۴-۱۴۹.

well as of the beginning and end of the stream of existence in its true reality. And this gnosis is not attainable for anyone except the elect of the awliya', the noblest and best of whom is the sacred essence of the Seal of Prophethood (S). All others are devoid of some or rather most of those stations. Rather, as long as the reality of Divine efficacy does not make an imprint on the devotee's heart and as long as he does not attain conviction that

لا مُؤَثِّرَ فِی الوُجُودِ إلا اللهُ.

.No one is effective in the realm of existence except God

the darkness and obfuscations of shirk and doubt (shakk) remain in his heart and he cannot thank God as he should. One whose gaze is fixed on causes and means and one who considers the efficacy of existents to be independent, does not relate the bounties to the Lord of bounty, and here lie the roots of ingratitude to God Almighty. .Such a one has carved out idols, each of which he considers to be efficient

At times, he relates actions to his own efficacy and even considers himself as having control over events and affairs. At times, he considers the natural aspects of the world of existence as being efficient, and at times he relates the bounties to their apparent dispensers while considering God to be bereft of any efficacy, believing :God's hands to be fettered, whereas

(غُلَّتْ أَیْدِیهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا.)

Fettered are their hands, and they are cursed

.(for what they have said (۵:۶۴

God’s dispensing hands are free, and the entire realm of being in reality belongs to Him, and no other has any role in it. Rather, the entire universe is the manifestation of His power and bounteousness and His beneficence envelopes everything. All bounties are from Him and no one has any bounty of his own that he may be its provider. Rather, the realm of existence owes its being to Him, and others have no (independent) being so that anything may be attributed to be them. However, the .eyes are blind, the ears are deaf and the hearts have curtains drawn upon them

دیده می خواهم سبب سوراخ کن.

.I want a vision that may pierce the (curtain of) causes

How long shall these dead hearts of ours remain ungrateful toward God’s bounties, and relate them to the world, its circumstances and persons? These attachments and attentions amount to ingratitude towards the bounteousness of the Sacred Essence and to its concealing grace. This shows that fulfillment of the demands of gratitude is not everyone’s job, and that Sacred Divine Essence, the Glorious and the Exalted, has declared: (وَقَلِيلٌ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ) That is, there are few servants who have adequate gnosis of God’s bounties or know them as they deserve to be known. And therefore, .there are few servants who stand up to fulfill the duties of gratitude

The Different Levels Of Shukr

And it should be known that even as the levels of knowledge of the servants of God are different, so also

are their levels of thankfulness. The levels of gratitude are also different because shukr is the praise of the Provider for His bounties. Thus, the outward kinds of bounties require one kind of gratitude and the inward bounties a gratitude of another kind. If the bounty is of the category of knowledge and gnosis, its shukr is of one kind, and if it is of the category of the irradiation of Divine Names it is of another kind, and if .of the category of the irradiation of the Divine Essence, it is of yet another kind

And since all the categories and levels of bounties are enjoyed only by a few of His servants, the effort to fulfill the duties of gratitude at all levels is only possible for a few. Those being the sincere (khullas) awliya', who, in their being, encompass the entire range and levels of being (jami' jami' al-hadarat), being the limit of all limits (barzakh al-barazikh), and encompasses all the exoteric and esoteric levels. Accordingly, their thanksgiving (shukr) is accomplished through all the apparent, .inward, and the inmost tongues

Although shukr has been said to be one of the stations pertaining to the common people because of its proximity to the claim to the requital of the Provider - and this is considered to be irreverence - however, such a proximity exists only for ethers than the awliya', especially the perfect (kummal) among them, who encompass the full range of being and possess the station of unity

and plurality. Therefore, the adept gnostic Khwajah ‘Abd Allah Ansari, who, although :he states that shukr is one of the stations of the common people, adds

وَالدَّرجهُ الثالثهُ أنْ لا يشْهدَ العبدُ إلا المُنعِمَ فإذا شهِدَ المُنعمَ عُبُودَهً اسْتعظَمَ منهُ النِّعمَهَ، وإذا شَهِدهُ حُبّاً اسْتَحْلى منهُ الشَّدّهَ، وإذا شهِدهُ تفْريداً لم يَشهَدْ منهُ نِعمَهً ولا شِدَّهً.

That is, the third degree of shukr lies there where the servant does not see anything except the beauty of the Mun’im, being immersed in His beauty. That consists of three stations. First, he observes Him as the humble slave contemplates his master. In this state, unaware of himself in His presence, he is fully immersed in reverence, not .setting any worth upon himself

When in this state of humility, if he is bestowed any bounty, he values it greatly, considering himself as insignificant and unworthy of it. Second, his observation is that of a lover observing his beloved. In this state he is immersed in the beauty of the Beloved and whatever he receives from Him, cherishing it, though it be affliction and hardship. Third, he observes Him without the limitations of the Names, or rather has the epiphany of the Essence itself. In this state, he forgets himself and others and sees nothing but the Divine Essence, and is conscious neither of any bounty nor .adversity

This shows that the first stage in all the stations of the wayfarers is the one tread by the common people, and the ultimate stages in all the stations

pertain exclusively to the sincere (khullas) or rather to the perfect (kummal) (of the .('awliya

The Station Of Shukr In Hadith

.We shall complete this section with the mention of some traditions relating to shukr

الكافى بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: الطَّاعِمُ الشَّاكِرُ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ كَأَجْرِ الصَّائِمِ الْمُحْتَسِبِ. وَالمُعَافَى الشَّاكِرُ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ كَأَجْرِ المُبْتَلى الصَّابِرِ. وَالمُعْطَى الشَّاكِرُ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ كَأَجْرِ المَحْرومِ القَانِعِ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni narrates with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "One who takes food with gratitude has a reward like the one who fasts exercising vigilance over himself. The healthy person grateful for his health has a reward like the one who bears his (bodily) afflictions patiently. And one who gives gratefully has a reward similar to the one who bears his deprivation with (continence."(١)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللهِ بنِ الوَلِيدِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: ثَلاثٌ لا يَضُرُّ مَعَهُنَّ شَيْءٌ: الدُّعَاءُ عِنْدَ الكَرْبِ وَالإِسْتِغْفَارُ عِنْدَ الذَّنْبِ وَالشُّكْرُ عِنْدَ النِّعْمَهِ.

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from 'Ubayd Allah ibn al-Walid that he said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say, "There are three things in whose presence nothing can harm one: prayer in affliction, seeking God's forgiveness for one's sins, and thanksgiving for (God's favors."(٢)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنكُمْ لَيَشْرَبُ الشُّرْبَهَ مِنَ المَاءِ فَيُوجِبُ اللهُ لَهُ بِهَا الجَنَّهَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: إِنَّهُ لَيَأْخُذُ الإِنَاءَ فَيَضَعُهُ عَلَى فِيهِ فَيُسَمِّى ثُمَّ يَشْرَبُ فَيُنَحِّيهِ وَهُوَ يَشْتَهِيهِ فَيَحْمَدُ اللهَ، ثُمَّ يَعُودُ

١- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. l.

٢- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no.٧.

فَيَشْرَبُ، ثُمَّ يُنَحِّيهِ فَيَحْمَدُ اللهَ، ثُمَّ يَعُودُ فَيَشْرَبُ، ثُمَّ يُنَحِّيهِ فَيَحْمَدُ اللهَ، فَيُوجِبُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهَا لَهُ الجَنَّةَ.

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Basir that Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said, "Verily one of you drinks water and God assigns paradise to him on that account." Then he (A) added, "Verily, one who takes the vessel (containing water), brings it to his mouth, then takes God's Name, then drinks from it, then draws it away while desiring it, then praises God, then drinks from it again, then takes it away while he desires it, praises God, then drinks from it again, then sets it aside and praises God, God, Almighty and Glorious, makes the paradise obligatory for him."(١)

Praise of God is the purveyor of gratitude, and, as has been stated in many traditions, one who says "Al-hamdu lillah' (All praise is God's) has offered his thanks to God. Al-Kulayni, in the noble al-Kafi, narrates this tradition through his isnad from 'Umar ibn Yazid:

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: شُكْرُ كُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ وَإِنْ عَظُمَتْ أَنْ تَحْمَدَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهَا.

'Umar ibn Yazid says: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say, "The (adequate mode of) thanksgiving for all favors, however great they may be, is that you praise God, the Almighty and the Glorious, on their account."(٢)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: شُكْرُ النِّعْمَهِ اجْتِنَابُ المَحَارِمِ وَتَمَامُ الشُّكْرِ قَوْلُ الرَّجُلِ: الحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ.

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Gratitude for God's

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١- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. ١۶.

٢- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. ١١.

gifts lies in abstaining from what He has made unlawful. One's thanksgiving is complete when one says: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."(١)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ قَالَ: خَرَجَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ مِنَ المَسْجِدِ، وَقَدْ ضَاعَتْ دَابَّتُهُ فَقَالَ: لَئِنْ رَدَّهَا اللهُ عَلَيَّ لأَشْكُرَنَّ اللهَ حَقَّ شُكْرِهِ. قَالَ: فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ أُتِيَ بِهَا، فَقَالَ: الحَمْدُ للهِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ قَائِلٌ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، أَلَيْسَ قُلْتَ: لأَشْكُرَنَّ اللهَ حَقَّ شُكْرِهِ؟ فَقَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: أَلَمْ تَسْمَعْنِي قُلْتُ: الحَمْدُ للهِ؟

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Hammad ibn 'Uthman that he said: Imam al-Sadiq (A) once came out of the mosque to find his mount missing. Thereupon the Imam (A) said, "Should God return it to me, I will thank Him as He deserves to be thanked." It was not long before the animal was brought to him. Thereat, the Imam (A) said, "Al-hamdu lillah." Someone said to him, "May I be made your ransom, didn't you say that you will thank God as He deserves to be thanked?" Imam al-Sadiq (A) said to him, "Didn't you hear me say: 'Al-hamdu lillah?"(٢)

This tradition shows that the praise of God is the best of the ways of oral thanksgiving. Among the effects of thanksgiving is increase in ni'mah, as mentioned unambiguously in the Noble Scripture:

(لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ.)

(If you are thankful, surely I will increase you. (١٩:٧)

And the noble al-Kafi has recorded this mustanad tradition of Imam al-Sadiq (A) in this regard:

قَالَ: مَنْ أُعْطِيَ الشُّكْرُ أُعْطِيَ الزِّيَادَهُ. يَقُولُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ

١- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. ١٠.

٢- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. ١٨.

لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ.)

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said: One who has been given thankfulness has been also given increase (in ni'mah) Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says: "If you are thankful, surely I (will increase you."(١)

Conclusion

You should know that 'A'ishah had imagined that the motive behind worship was confined to the fear of punishment or the effacement of sins. She had imagined that the worship of the Noble Prophet (S) was like the worship of other people. Therefore, she had wondered as to why the Prophet (S) took so much pains. This thought was as much due to her ignorance of the station of worship and servantship as due to the ignorance of the station of prophethood and messengership. She did not know that .the worship of slaves and hirelings was foreign to the sacred station of that master

The majesty of the Lord and gratitude for His unlimited bounties had made comfort and ease foreign to his holy being. Rather, the worship of the sincere awliya' is the stage of the boundless irradiations of the Beloved, as pointed out in the prayer of the heavenly ascent. The holy awliya' (A) while being absorbed in the beauty and glory of the Beloved and effaced in His attributes and Essence, are never negligent of any of the stages of servantship. Their bodily movements are subject to their spiritual stirrings, suffused with love, which are subject to the quality of the manifestation of .the Beloved's beauty

However, to satisfy someone like 'A'ishah it is not possible to give

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.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-shukr," hadith no. ۸ -١

any but a perfunctory explanation. Hence, the Prophet (S) confined himself to mentioning one of the lower stations so as to make her understand that the worship of that master was not aimed at such base purposes. And all praise is God's.

رَوَى عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِى تَفْسِيرِهِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ وَأَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ قَالا: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِذَا صَلَّى قَامَ عَلَى أَصَابِعِ رِجْلَيْهِ حَتَّى تَوَرَّمَتْ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: (طه - بِلُغَةِ طَيٍّ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ - مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى. إِلا تَذْكِرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَى.)

Ali ibn Ibrahim, in his tafsir, reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) and Abu 'Abd' Allah (A) that they said: The Messenger of Allah (S) used to pray while standing on his toes, until his feet became swollen. Thereupon Allah, Blessed and Exalted, sent down the verse: "Taha," —it meant: O Muhammad!— We have not sent down the Qur'an upon thee to put thee to hardship. (۲۰:۱-۲)"(۱)

وَعَنِ الصَّدُوقِ فِى مَعَانِى الأَخْبَارِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ سُفْيَانَ الثَّوْرِىِّ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِى حَدِيثٍ طَوِيلٍ قَالَ فِيهِ: وَأَمَّا (طه) فَإِسْمٌ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ النَّبِىِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَمَعْنَاهُ: يَا طَالِبَ الحَقِّ الهَادِى إِلَيْهِ.

Al-Saduq in Ma'ani al-'akhbar reports with his isnad from Sufyan al-Thawri from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said in the course of a long tradition: "As to Taha, it is one of the names of the Prophet (S) and it means: O seeker of the Truth (talib al-Haqq) and the Guide towards it (al-hadi ilayh)." (۲)

And it has been

۱- Tafsir al-Qummi, ii, ۵۸.

۲- Ma'ani al-'akhbar, ۲۲.

narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas and others that Taha means ‘O Man’. It has been narrated from some Sunni scholars (‘ammah) that Ta refers to the purity (taharah) of the Holy Prophet’s heart and Ha refers to its receiving guidance (hidayah) towards God. And it has been said that Ta means the delight (tarab) felt by the inhabitants of paradise and Ha signifies the disgrace and degradation (hawan) felt by the inmates of hell. Al-Tabrisi (M) says, “It has been narrated from al-Hasan that he would read (Ta ha) as with fathah on the ta and sukun on the ha. Should this reading of his be (طه) Tah correct, then it must originally have been ta, with the hamzah having changed to ha. :Then the meaning of the verse becomes

طَأِ الأَرْضَ بِرِجْلَيْکَ جَمِيعاً.

(Take the earth under both of thy feet.(۱)

There is a severe disagreement about the significance of the isolated letters (al-huruf al-muqatta’ah) at the beginning of the Qur’anic surahs. That which seems more likely is that they are of the kind of secrets exchanged between lovers, of whose significance others do not partake. The conjectures advanced by some exegetes in this regard are mostly without any source. The tradition narrated by Sufyan al-Thawri also indicates their being secret symbols, and it is not very improbable that they relate .to matters, which lie beyond human comprehension

Through them God Almighty has addressed His elect, and there is nothing that is ’mutashabih (in the Qur’an) but that they know its interpretation.(۲) Shaqa

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۱- Al-Tabrisi, Majma’ al-bayan; earlier to this command the Prophet (S) used to pray .while standing on one foot

۲- .This refers to verse ۲۸:۵۶

and shaqawah (whose derivative tashqa occurs in ٢٠:١) are antonyms of sa’adah :(felicity) and mean hardship and trouble. This is what al-Jawhari states

الشَّقاءُ والشَّقاوَهُ نَقیضُ السَّعادَه.

:Al-Tabrisi narrates this tradition in his al-’Ihtijaj

رَوَی الطَّبرْسِیُّ فِی الاحْتِجاجِ عَنْ مُوسَی بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ آبائِهِ عَلَیهِمُ السَّلامُ قالَ: قالَ أَمِیرُ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: وَلَقَدْ قامَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ عَشْرَ سِنِینَ عَلَی أَطْرافِ أَصابِعِهِ حَتَّی تَوَرَّمَتْ قَدَماهُ وَاصْفَرَّ وَجْهُهُ یَقُومُ اللَّیْلَ أَجْمَعَ حَتَّی عُوِیبَ عَلَی ذَلِکَ، فَقالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (طه. ما أَنْزَلْنا عَلَیْکَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَی.)

Imam Muse ibn Ja’far (A) narrates from his ancestors (A) that Amir al Mu’minin (A) said: For ten years the Messenger of Allah (S) stood on his toes (in his prayers) until his feet became swollen and his face turned yellowish. He would stand all the night until he was reproached in this regard. God Almighty said to him, “Taha, We have not sent down the Qur’an upon you to cause you hardship.” That is, We have sent it down upon .you that you may be felicitous and happy thereby

And it has been narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that the Prophet (S) would lift one of his blessed feet during worship in order to make it harder upon himself. ‘Thereat God Almighty sent down this noble verse. Some exegetes have opined that this noble verse is intended as an answer to the polytheists who said that the Prophet had fallen .into hardship by abandoning their faith

:The perfect ‘arif Shahabadi (D) used to say

After some time

that that blessed being (i.e. the Prophet) invited the people to his creed and it did not prove to be as effective as he wished, that master thought that perhaps there was something lacking in his call. Thereafter he devoted himself to austerities for a period of ten years, until his blessed feet became swollen. Then the noble verse came down: Don't subject yourself to hardship. You are pure, and a true guide. The defect is not in :you but in the people, and that

(إِنَّکَ لَا تَهْدِی مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَکِنَّ اللَّهَ یَهْدِی مَنْ یَشَاءُ.)

(Thou guidest not whom thou likest, but God guides whom He wills. (۲۸:۵۶

In any case that which we infer from the noble verse is that the Prophet (S) used to devote himself to austerities and hardships, and this is what we understand on the whole from the sayings of the exegetes, although they differ regarding the exact character of those austerities. This should be an example and a lesson for the .Ummah, especially for the learned who wish to call people to God

That blessed being, with his purity of heart and perfectness would subject himself to such austerities and pains until he was asked to relax by the noble verse sent down by the Sacred Divine Essence. And we, with all the enormous burden of our sins and offences, are never mindful of our hereafter, resurrection, and return, as if we have been guaranteed immunity from punishment and security from hellfire! The reason of it is

nothing but that the love of world has stuffed its cotton into our ears and we no longer listen to the words of the Prophets and the awliya'.

Twenty–Second Hadith: The Aversion For Death

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى رُكْنِ الإسْلام وَثِقَتِهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ، عَنِ الحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أبِى عُثْمَانَ، عَنْ وَاصِلٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ، عَنْ أبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إلَى أبِى ذَرٍّ فَقَالَ: يَا أبَا ذَرٍّ، مَا لَنَا نَكْرَهُ المَوْتَ؟ فَقَالَ: لأَنَّكُمْ عَمَّرْتُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَأَخْرَبْتُمُ الآخِرَهَ فَتَكْرَهُونَ أنْ تُنْقَلُوا مِنْ عُمْرانٍ إلى خَرابٍ. فَقِالَ لَهُ: فَكَيْفَ تَرَى قُدُومَنَا عَلَى اللهِ؟ فَقَالَ: أمَّا المُحْسِنُ مِنْكُمْ فَكَالغَائِبِ يَقْدِمُ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَأَمَّا المُسِيءُ مِنْكُمْ فَكَالآبِقِ يُرَدُّ عَلَى مَوْلاهُ. قَالَ: فَكَيْفَ تَرَى حَالَنَا عِنْدَ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: إعْرِضُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ عَلَى الكِتَابِ: إنَّ اللهَ يَقُولُ: (إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِى نَعِيمٍ. وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِى جَحِيمٍ.) قَالَ: فَقَالَ الرَّجُلُ: فَأَيْنَ رَحْمَهُ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: (رَحْمَهَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِنْ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.)

قَالَ أبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: وَكَتَبَ رَجُلٌ إلَى أَبِى ذَرٍّ، رَضِىَ اللهُ عَنْهُ: يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، أَطْرِفْنِى بِشَىْءٍ مِنَ العِلْم. فَكَتَبَ إلَيْهِ: العِلْمُ كَثِيرٌ، وَلَكِنْ إنْ قَدِرْتَ أنْ لا تُسِىءَ إلَى مَنْ تُحِبُّهُ فَافْعَلْ. قَالَ: فَقَالَ لَهُ الرَّجُلُ: وَهَلْ رَأَيْتَ أَحَداً يُسِىءُ إلَى مَنْ يُحِبُّهُ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ: نَعَمْ، نَفْسُكَ أَحَبُّ الأنْفُسِ إلَيْكَ، فَإِذَا أَنْتَ عَصَيْتَ اللهَ فَقَدْ أسَأْتَ إلَيْهَا.

With my continuous sanad reaching up to the pillar of Islam and its reliable authority, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from some of his teachers, from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi 'Uthman, from Wasil,

from ‘Abd Allah ibn Sinan, from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said: A man came to Abu Dharr and said to him, “O Abu Dharr, what is wrong with us that we abhor death?” Abu Dharr replied, “That is because you have built and cultivated your world and ruined your Hereafter. So, you hate to be moved from prosperity towards desolation.” He was asked, “How do you see our entry into God’s presence?” Abu Dharr replied, “As to the good-doer amongst you, he is like someone returning to his family after a (long) absence. As to the evil-doer amongst you, he is like an absconding slave being returned to his master.” He was asked, “How do you see our situation before God?” Abu Dharr replied, “Evaluate your deeds in view of the Qur’anic criterion. Verily God says: Surely, the pious shall be in bliss and the profane shall he in a fiery furnace (۸۲:۱۲-۳). The Imam (A) added: Thereat, the man said, “Then, where is the mercy of ”.God?” Abu Dharr replied, “The mercy of God is near to the good-doers

Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) continued: A man wrote to Abu Dharr (R), “O Abu Dharr, teach me something new of knowledge.” Abu Dharr wrote to him, “Knowledge is vast. However, if you can abstain from wronging someone that you love, do so.” The man asked him, “Have you seen anyone wrong someone that he loves?” Abu Dharr replied, “Yes, your own self is the dearest of all things

(to you. And when you disobey God you have wronged it."(1)

Exposition

One should know that people differ in their fear and abhorrence of death and the reasons that underlie their abhorrence. That which Hadrat Abu Dharr (R) has described, relates to the state of the middle ones (mutawassitun) and we will briefly describe here the condition of the deficient (naqisun) as well as that of the perfect (kamilun).

It should be known that the fear and abhorrence of ours, the deficient (naqisun), for death is on account of a cause that was referred to in the course of exposition of some of the foregoing traditions. It lies in this that man, in accordance with his original and God-given nature, loves life and survival and hates death and extinction.

This love is related to absolute survival and immortal, everlasting life, a survival free from extinction and a life that knows no end. Some of our honored predecessors used to prove the necessity of Resurrection on the basis of this human nature, and a description of their arguments here is outside the aims of our present discourse. Now, since this love and that hate lie in human nature, man comes to love that which he reckons to be the enduring realm of life and hates that which he regards as being contrary to it. Since we have no faith in the realm of the Hereafter and our hearts have no conviction in immortal life and eternal survival, we are attached to this world and

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1- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr" "bab muhasabat al-'amal", hadith no. ۲۰.

.abhor death in accordance with that nature

We have mentioned earlier that rational Judgment and perception is different from the faith and conviction of the heart. In accordance with our rational apperception, or Judgment based on traditional belief (taqlid), we affirm that death—which is a transition from the dark, lowly sphere of corporeal (mulki) existence to the radiant world of immortal life and the everlasting higher sphere of incorporeal (malakuti) .existence—is a reality

However, our hearts do not partake of this knowledge and are oblivious of it. Rather, our hearts cling to earthly nature and the corporeal realm and consider life to be exclusively confined to the lower corporeal mode of animal life. They do not believe in the life and immortality of the other world, which is the world of Hereafter and the realm of (pure) life. Hence, we put total reliance in this world and regard the other world with fear, repulsion, and resentment. All the misfortunes of ours are on account .of this lack of faith and conviction

Had we even a tenth of what faith we have in this world's life and living, its existence and survival, in the world of the Hereafter and its eternal, everlasting life, our hearts would have been more attached to it and we would have devoted some effort to building it. But, alas, the springs of our faith are dry and the edifice of our faith rests on water. Inevitably, we fear death, extinction, and end. The exclusive and definite remedy for

this malady is cultivation of faith in the heart through beneficial reflection and .remembrance as well as sound knowledge and works

However, as to the fear and abhorrence of the mutawassitun—that is, those who have inadequate faith in Hereafter—that is because the attention of their hearts is turned to the cultivation of the world and they are neglectful of cultivating the Hereafter. Therefore, they are not inclined to move from a well-built and prosperous place to one, which is a desolation, as pointed out by Hadrat Abu Dharr (R). This .attitude is also on account of inadequate faith and conviction

Otherwise, with a complete faith it is not possible that one should confine his efforts to the base mundane affairs to the neglect of the Hereafter. On the whole, these fears, anxieties, and hatreds arise from unwholesomeness of deeds, waywardness and opposition to one's Master (Mawla). Otherwise, had our evaluation been a correct one and had we critically examined ourselves we would not have been fearful of God's .reckoning

For there, the reckoning is just and the judge is a just one. Hence, our fear of the reckoning is due to our own inequity and our self-deceptive and fraudulent evaluation of our own selves. In the noble al-Kafi, the following musnad tradition of Hadrat Musa :ibn Ja'far (A) is recorded

قَالَ: لَيْسَ مِنّا مَنْ لَمْ يُحَاسِبْ فِيْ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ نَفْسَهُ، فَإِنْ عَمِلَ حَسَناً اسْتَزَادَ اللهَ مِنْهُ وَحَمِدَ اللهَ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنْ عَمِلَ شَيْئاً اسْتَغْفَرَ اللهَ مِنْهُ وَتَابَ إِلَيْهِ.

The Imam (A) said, "One who

does not examine and evaluate himself every day is not one of us (i.e. he is not a follower of the Prophet and the Ahl al Bayt). (A person who examines himself every day), if he does a good deed, he beseeches God to increase him (in virtues and if he has perpetrated a vice, he seeks God's forgiveness for it and is penitent before (Him."(۱)

Hence, if you have been taking account of yourself, you shall have no fear of the time of reckoning, for the perils and tribulations of that world are subject to the works performed in this. For instance, had you walked in this world on the straight path of prophethood and the straight path of wilayah without deviating or swerving from the path of the wilayah of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (M) there will be no fear on you when passing (over the Sirat.(۲)

For the reality of the Sirat is the inward form of the wilayah, as it has been mentioned in ahadith that Amir al-Mu'minin (A) is the Sirat.(۳) In another tradition, the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt are reported to have stated, "We are the Sirat." In the blessed al-:Ziyarat al-jami'ah, it is stated

أَنْتُمُ السَّبِيلُ الأَعْظَمُ وَالصِّرَاطُ الأَقْوَمُ.

(You (the Ahl al-Bayt) are the greatest path (sabil) and the firmest way (Sirat).(۴)

Whoever moves on this path steadily without stumbling, his feet will not stagger on that Sirat too, and he will pass over it in a moment as short as the stroke of

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۱- Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr" "bab muhasabat al-'amal", hadith no. ۲.

۲- Tafsir al-burhan, i. ۴۶.

۳- Tafsir al-burhan, ۵۱.

۴- Man la yahduruhu al-faqih, ii, ۶۱۳; Mafitih al-jinan, "al-Ziyarat al-jami'ah al-kabirah".

lightning. Similarly, should his morals and habits be equitable and radiant, he will be immune from the darkness and horrors of the grave, of the Barzakh and the Resurrection, and there will be no fear upon him in those realms. Hence, here, we are ourselves responsible for the malady, and its remedy is in our own hands, as pointed :out by Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin in verses ascribed to him

دَوَاؤُکَ فِيکَ وَمَا تَشْعُرُ وَدَاؤُکَ مِنْکَ وَمَا تُبْصِرُ

The remedy lies in you and you perceive not

(The malady arises from you and you discern not.(١

:(And the noble al-Kafi records the following musnad tradition of al' Imam al-Sadiq (A

قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ لِرَجُلٍ: إِنَّکَ قَدْ جُعِلْتَ طَبِيبَ نَفْسِکَ وَبُيِّنَ لَکَ الـدَّاءُ وَعُرِّفْتَ آيَهَ الصِّحَّهِ وَدُلِلْتَ عَلَى الـدَّوَاءِ، فَانْظُرْ کَيْفَ قِيَامُکَ عَلَى نَفْسِکَ.

The Imam (A) said to a man, "Verily, you have been made your own doctor. The malady has been described to you, the sign of health ho also been made known to you, and the medicine has been shown to you. Hence look how you attend your own (soul."(٢

You are afflicted with corrupt beliefs, morals, and behavior. The signs of health are contained in the prescriptions of the prophets and the illuminations of (primordial) nature and the intellect. The remedy for the soul's sickness lies in taking steps for its removal. This is the condition of the mutawassitun. However, as to

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.The Diwan ascribed to Amir al-Mu'minin, ۵۷ -١

.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr", "bab muhasabat al-amal," hadith no. ۶ -٢

the condition of the perfect and those of convinced faith, they have no abhorrence of death, although they may regard it with fear and anxiety on account of their awe of the Majesty of God, the Exalted, and the dignity of that Sacred Essence. And hence, ;the Messenger of Allah (S) used to say

فَأَيْنَ هَوْلُ المُطَّلَعِ؟

?So where is the terror of him who knows

And Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (A) had a terrific fear and horror on the night of the :nineteenth of Ramadan (the night of his assassination), although he used to say

وَاللهِ، لابْنُ أَبِى طَالِبٍ آنَسُ بِالمَوْتِ مِنَ الطِّفْلِ بِثَدْيِ أُمِّهِ.

By God, the son of Abu Talib is more intimate with death than an infant with its .mother's bosom

(۱)

Their fear is on account of other matters and is not like the fear of those like us who are in the chains of desires and hopes and are enamored to the transitory world. The hearts of the awliya', too, greatly differ from one another. Their difference cannot be encompassed by any description or writing, and we will refer briefly to some of their .points of difference

The hearts of the awliya' differ in their capacity to receive the irradiations (tajalliyat) of the Divine Names. The hearts of some of them are characterized with love and yearning and God Almighty is manifested in them through the Names of Beauty (Jamal). Such an irradiation brings an awe suffused with yearning, and the fear in their terror is on account of the manifestation of

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۱- Nahj al- balaghah, Khutab, No. ۵.

Divine Majesty and its vision. The lover's heart palpitates with fear and anxiety as the time of meeting the beloved approaches, but this anxiety and terror is different from .the ordinary kinds of fear

The hearts of some of them are characterized with trepidation and grief and God Almighty is manifested in them through the Names of Majesty and Glory. Such a tajalli creates an intense yearning suffused with dread and a wonder and an awe suffused with grief. And it is related in hadith that once Hadrat Yahya –John- (A) noticed Hadrat 'Isa –Jesus- (A) laughing. Angrily, he said to the latter, "It appears as if you are immune of God's chastisement!" Hadrat 'Isa retorted, "It appears as if you have despaired of God's mercy and beneficence!" God Almighty revealed to them that, ".“Whoever of you has a better opinion of Me is the dearer to Me

Since God manifested Himself in the heart of Hadrat Yahya (A) through the Names of Majesty, he always dwelt in dread and awe and showed his displeasure to Hadrat 'Isa (A), who gave him a reply in accordance with the tajalliyat of Divine Mercy and .Compassion

The Reality Of Heaven And Hell

you have built the) عَمَّرْتُمُ الدُّنْيا وَأَخْرَبْتُمُ الآخِرَة :The literal meaning of the hadith where it says world and ruined the Hereafter) is that the abodes of the Hereafter and paradise are places already built and flourishing that are turned into ruins by our works. But it is obvious that the intent is parallelism of expression. Since the term

ta'mir (building) was used in relation to the world, the parallel term takhrib (destruction) was used in relation to the Hereafter. Although the realms of hell and paradise are creations (of God), the building agency of paradise and the material of hell is subject to the deeds of their inhabitants.(۱) And this interpretation is in accordance with demonstrative proof as well as mystic intuition (kashf). Hence, some of the researchers among the mystics have said:

Let it be known to you - may God preserve you and us from error - that hell (Jahannam) is one of God's great creations, and it is God's prison in the Hereafter. It is called 'Jahannam' because of the remoteness of its pit. Hence, a well with a deep pit is called bi'r jahnam. It contains heat and bitter cold. Its coldness reaches the extreme degree of cold and its heat the extreme degree of hotness. A distance of seven hundred and fifty years' journey separates its uppermost and lowermost parts. The people disagree as to whether it is a creation or not, and similarly they disagree concerning paradise. However, in our opinion and that of our companions and the mystics, they are and are not creations. When we say that they are creations, it is like saying of a man building a house and who has built only its boundary walls that "he has built a house." However, on entering one sees nothing but an area and space surrounded by a wall. It is

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۱- Al-Saduq, al-'Amali, majlis no. ۶۹, p. ۴۰۵.

only afterwards that its inner quarters shall be built with rooms, compartments, storerooms, and water tanks in accordance with the needs of those who shall come to .live therein

And it is mentioned in hadith that when the Messenger of Allah (S) went on his noble ascent (mi'raj), he saw certain angels in paradise who would, for some time, engage .in constructing buildings and for some time stopped their work

The Prophet (S) asked Gabriel (A), "What is the reason behind this?" Gabriel (A) replied, 'The material for this building is made up of the remembrance of the individuals of the Ummah. Whenever they engage in remembrance, the material becomes available for building and the angels too resume their building work. But when they cease in their remembrance, these angels too stop their work."'(١)

The physical form of heaven and hell is made up of the forms of the good and evil works and deeds of the Children of Adam, which return to them in that world. This has also been referred to in the noble verses of the Qur'an, as in the following utterance :of God Almighty

(وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا.)

(And they find all that they did confronting them. (١٨:۴٩

:And

إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ تُرَدُّ إِلَيْكُمْ.

(Indeed, these are your own works that are being returned to you.(٢

It is possible that the worlds of heaven and hell are two independent realms and abodes towards which the Children of Adam journey through substantial motions (harakat al-jawhari) and voluntary spiritual (malakuti) movements derived from their

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.Bihar al-'anwar, xviii, ٢٩٢ -١

۲- Al-Majlisi, ‘Ilm al-yaqin, ii, ۸۸۴.

behavior and character, where they receive their share of the Hereafter in the shape .of the forms of their works

The heaven is the higher malakuti realm, being an independent sphere by itself towards which the felicitous spirits are directed, and the hell is the nether malakuti realm towards which the spirits of the wretched make their journey. But that which each of them encounters in its own sphere are the fair and blessed or painful and dreadful forms of their own deeds. This description reconciles the literal meanings of the Book and the traditions -which are apparently contradictory-and is also in .'agreement with philosophical proofs as well as the teaching of the urafa

It is obvious that this saying of Hadrat Abu Dharr (R) consists of a comprehensive and firm command which every human being must observe with due care. Thereafter Hadrat Abu Dharr says that one should examine his deeds in the light of the Book of God. And God says: Mankind consist of two groups: the pious, who are in bliss, and the wayward, who are in hell. The man (who questioned Abu Dharr) made an attempt to cling to Divine mercy when he said, "If that is so, then where is the mercy of God Almighty?" Abu Dharr replied: God's mercy is not extravagant; it is near to the good-.doers

You should know that the accursed Satan and the vicious self that incites man to evil .deceive the human being in many ways and drive him towards eternal damnation

The last arrow in their quiver is to deceive man through hope in Divine mercy and to keep man from (virtuous) action by the means of this deception, for this kind of reliance on Divine mercy is one of Satanic snares and deceits.

The evidence of it is that we never put any trust in the mercy of God, the Exalted, in our mundane affairs, and we consider natural and apparent means as being independent and effective, to the extent of believing that there is no efficient agency in the world except the apparent causes. However, in matters relating to the Hereafter we imagine ourselves to be reliant on Divine mercy while we neglect the commands of God and His Messenger (A) as if God had given us no power to act and had not shown us the paths of (spiritual) health and sickness.

In the matters of the world we follow the creed of tafwid (the belief that God has delegated complete freedom to man), while in relation to the matters of the Hereafter we follow the creed of jabr (fatalism), forgetting that both of them are wrong, void and contrary to the teachings of the prophets (A) and the abiding path of the Imams of guidance and the awliya' near to God, whose faith was greater than all others and all of whom had convinced faith in Divine mercy. Notwithstanding it, they did not neglect their duties and did not leave off effort and endeavor for a single moment.

Brother!

Study the book of their works! Read the supplications of Sayyid al-Sajidin Zayn al-Abidin (A). Look carefully and see how he approaches God in the station of servantship ('Ubudiyyah). See how he attends to the duties of slavehood. Despite it all, when he studies the book of works of the Master of the Pious, Amir al-Mu'minin (A) he !expresses his regret and his incapability

Does it mean that, na'udhu billah, we should question their veracity and say that they did not, like us, possess faith and conviction in Divine mercy? Or should we doubt our own veracity and understand once for all that all that we say are no more than snares of Satan and deceits of the carnal self, which scheme to deviate us from the straight !path? We take refuge in God, the Exalted, from their malice

And so, my dear, knowledge is extensive, as remarked by Hadrat Abu Dharr to that man, but the beneficial piece of knowledge for the likes of us is to abstain from doing ourselves this extent of wrong. We must understand that the commands of the prophets and the awliya' (A) contain certain truths which are concealed from us. They, who know what kind of forms and consequences these corrupt words and evil acts of ours possess and what kind of blessed malakuti forms the noble morals and good .deeds have, have described all the maladies and their remedies

You - should you have any love for yourself - should not pass by

these prescriptions. Decide to cure your afflictions and diseases. Should we move in this condition of ours from this world to the next, God knows what afflictions, .calamities and pains await us! And all praise is God’s at the beginning and the end

Twenty–Third Hadith: The Seekers Of Knowledge

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى حُجَّهِ الفِرْقَهِ وَثِقَتِهَا مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِيِّ رَضِىَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَفَعَهُ إِلَى أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: طَلَبَهُ العِلْمِ ثَلاثَهٌ فَاعْرِفْهُمْ بِأَعْيَانِهِمْ وَصِفَاتِهِمْ: صِنْفٌ يَطْلُبُهُ لِلْجَهْلِ وَالمِرَاءِ، وَصِنْفٌ يَطْلُبُهُ لِلاسْتِطَالَهِ وَالخَتْلِ، وَصِنْفٌ يَطْلُبُهُ لِلْفِقْهِ وَالعَقْلِ. فَصَاحِبُ الجَهْلِ وَالمِرَاءِ مُوذٍ مُمَارٍ مُتَعَرِّضٌ لِلْمَقَالِ فِى أَنْدِيَهِ الرِّجَالِ بِتَذَاكُرِ العِلْمِ وَصِفَهِ الحِلْمِ، قَدْ تَسَرْبَلَ بِالخُشُوعِ وَتَخَلَّى مِنَ الوَرَعِ فَدَقَّ اللهُ مِنْ هَذَا خَيْشُومَهُ وَقَطَعَ مِنْهُ حَيْزُومَهُ. وَصَاحِبُ الإسْتِطَالَهِ وَالخَتْلِ ذو خَبٍّ وَمَلَقٍ وَيَسْتَطِيلُ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ مِنْ أَشْبَاهِهِ وَيَتَواضَعُ لِلأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْ دُونِهِ، فَهُوَ لِحَلْوَائِهِمْ هَاضِمٌ وَلِدِينِهِ حَاطِمٌ، فَأَعْمَى اللهُ عَلَى هَذَا خَبَرَهُ وَقَطَعَ مِنْ آثَارِ العُلَمَاءِ أَثَرَهُ. وَصَاحِبُ الفِقْهِ وَالعَقْلِ ذو كَآبَهٍ وَحُزْنٍ وَسَهَرٍ؛ قَدْ تَحَنَّكَ فِى بُرْنُسِهِ وَقَامَ اللَّيْلَ فِى حِنْدِسِهِ يَعْمَلُ وَيَخْشَى وَجِلاً دَاعِياً مُشْفِقاً مُقْبِلاً عَلَى شَأْنِهِ عَارِفاً بِأَهْلِ زَمَانِهِ مُسْتَوْحِشاً مِنْ أَوْثَقِ إِخْوَانِهِ، فَشَدَّ اللهُ مِنْ هَذَا أَرْكَانَهُ وَأَعْطَاهُ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ أَمَانَهُ. وحدَّثنى به محمد بن محمود أبو عبدالله القزوينى عن عِدَّه من أصحابنا منهم جعفر بن محمد الصيقل بقزوين عن أحمد بن عيسى العلوى عن عباد بن صهيب البصرى عن أبى عبدالله عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ.

With my chain of transmission reaching up to the proof of the sect and its authority, Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni (R) from ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, who reports in a marfu’ ((i.e. without mentioning intermediary authorities

tradition from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “The seekers of (sacred) knowledge are of three kinds, so recognize them by their specific qualities and characteristics. One kind of them seeks it for the sake of ignorance and dispute. Another kind seeks it for the sake of domination and deceit. Yet another kind seeks it for the sake of (improving) understanding and intellect.

The one who seeks it for ignorance and dispute’s sake is injurious and quarrelsome. He contests opinions in the gatherings of men, speaking of knowledge and describing forbearance. He puts on the garb of humility, though he is devoid of piety. As a result, God crushes his nose and severs his waist.

The one who seeks knowledge for domination and deception is an imposter and a sycophant. He is domineering with those who are his likes but is humble in front of the rich, whose sweetmeats he ingests while he demolishes his own faith. As a result, God blinds his vision and wipes out his traces from the legacy of the learned.

As to him who seeks knowledge for the sake of understanding and intellection, he is grief-stricken and awake at nights. Having tied his cap with the loose end of his turban, he stands up in the dark of nights. He acts and is in trepidation. A caller overawed, engaged in his work, and acquainted with the people of his times, he is apprehensive of his most trusted brother. As a result of it God strengthens his

".supports and grants him amnesty on the Day of Resurrection

Al-Kulayni (M) says: This tradition was also narrated to me by Muhammad ibn Mahmud Abu 'Abd Allah al-Qazwini from several of our companions, among them Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sayqal at Qazwin, from Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Alawi, from 'Abbad (ibn Suhayb al-Basri, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A).(١

Exposition

so what is meant is: "Know them فَــاعْرِفُهُمْ is for stress on the pronoun of بِأَعْيَـانِهِمْ themselves, so that they become determined and specified and are not mistaken with :I saw him himself and رَأَيْتُهُ بِعَيْنِهِ others." Similarly, it is said

كُلُّ شَىءٍ فيهِ حَلالٌ وحَرامٌ فهُوَ لكَ حَلالٌ حتَّى تَعرِفَ الحَرامَ بِعَينِهِ.

Everything that contains halal and haram is halal for you so far as you know that .which is haram itself

The authoritative traditionist al-Majlisi (R) has mentioned various possible meaning which are extremely far-fetched and do not include this evident and (بِأَعْيَانِهِمْ here (i.e. of :apparent possibility. He says

means 'their kinds and the understanding of their categories' or 'such of their بِأَعْيَانِهِمْ بِأَعْيَانِهِمْ actions are visible and observable...' Also it has been said, 'The meaning of means, 'their kinds and the understanding if their categories. Also, it has been said, is their look, appearance and postures, such as their putting on بِأَعْيَانِهِمْ "The meaning of '.the garb of humility

means 'their وَصِـــفَاتِهِمْ.Then he suggests other and as remote possibilities characteristics', that is, those conditions which are subject to the personal traits and purposes of these three categories, such as injuriousness, disputatiousness and so ,on. Hence

.Al-Kafi, “kitab fadl al-’ilm”, “bab al-nawadir”, hadith ٥ -١

.these characteristics depict their condition by which they are specifically recognized

Jahl (ignorance) is the opposite of ‘ilm (knowledge), and here it probably means concealing the truth or pretending not to know it or absence of its acceptance. Later :on, we will discuss it in further detail. Al-Majlisi says in this regard

الجَهل: السَّفاهَهُ وتَرکُ الحِلمِ. وقیلَ: ضِدّ العِلمِ.

.Jahl means foolishness and imprudence. It is also said to be the opposite of reason

Mira’ means jidal (controversy) in doctrine and theology (kalam) and is derived from the same verbal root as jadal (dialectic) which is one of the Five Topics (al-sina’at al-:khams) in logic. Al-Jawhari, in al-Sihah, says

یُقالُ: مارَیتُ الرجُلَ أُمارِیهِ مِراءً إذا جادَلتُهُ.

Although here kalam means speech in general but the intended meaning is apparently that which has been mentioned. There is another possible meaning .involved here which we shall mention in one of the following sections

Istitalah means seeking loftiness and eminence. Khatl, with fathah on kha’ and sukun :on ta’, means deception and imposture. Al-Jawhari says

خَتَلَهُ وخَاتَلَه أیْ خَدَعَهُ. والتَّخاتُل التَّخادُع.

As to the word mumar, we will explain later on why one who indulges in mira’ is defined as mumar, (which being a verbal tautology does not seem to be a valid definition) and the one who indulges in istitalah and khatl as one who seeks to dominate his likes and one who resorts to khibb, for khibb (like khatl) also means .deception

it means expressing opinions. A lexicographer gives the مُتَعَرّضٌ لِمَقال As to the phrase following instance of

:usage

يُقالُ: عَرضتُ له الشَّیءَ؛ إذا أظْهَرتُه لهُ. وَعَرَضَ له أمرُ كذا ويعرِضُ: أی ظَهَرَ.

Andiyah is plural of nadi, meaning a circle or club where people assemble for meeting and discussion. From it is derived dar al-nadwah, which was a place in Makkah, which was built for assembly and consultation. Nadiyy, nadwah, muntada, and mutanadda .have the same meaning, as pointed out by al-Jawhari

The phrase bi tadhdkur al-'ilm refers to maqal or is its appositional substantive (badal), and to it is conjuncted wa sifat al-hilm. What is meant is that 'they hold scholarly discourses in order to be reckoned among the learned, and they describe and extol forbearance to be counted among the forbearing, whereas they are neither among the learned nor the forbearing. His learning is a kind of ignorance that resembles knowledge and his forbearance is devoid of the excellent qualities of .forbearance.' Later on we will have occasion to discuss this sort

Tasarbala pertains to the derivative formation tafa'lul, meaning putting on a sirbal- a :garment. According to the lexicographer

يُقالُ: سَربَلتُهُ فَتَسربَلَ. أیْ ألبَستُهُ السِّربَالَ.

Tasarbala bi al-khushu' means, 'he has put on the garment of humility,' appearing to be associated with it in the way a garment adheres to and is associated with the body, .though he is devoid of it, since the garment he has put on is a borrowed one

Wara' with a fathah on ra', means complete abstinence from that which is haram or .suspect

The sentence fa-daqqa Allah... and those resembling it in the following two

sentences, may either imply a curse or may be taken to be indicative of their condition in the world or the hereafter, or in both. Daqq means knocking, or is a noun denoting .sound

The words min hadha mean ‘as a result of this quality.’ Khayshum is the upper part of the nose and that which is connoted by ‘crushing the nose’ is disgracing and humiliating. That is, God Almighty disgraces and humiliates them on account of those .characteristics, and we will have occasion to discuss it further later on

Hayzum, with a fathah on ha’ and dammah on za’, means ‘the place where the waist band is tied’, or ‘the middle of the breast’, or ‘a circumscribing bone like the one .encircling the neck.’ The first meaning, which suits the idea of severance, fits here

رَجُـل خِبٌّ ,Khibb means deception, wickedness, and imposture. As al-Jawhari says means a deceitful man. Malaq means flattery and sycophancy, and implies what al-i.e. one who expresses with his tongue يُعطى بِلِسانِه ما لَيسَ فى قَلْبِه Jawhari says in al-Sihah that which is not in his heart. This interpretation is rather general, for malaq or tamalluq means an expression of love and attachment mixed with a show of humility .while these are not in one’s heart

al-Majlisi points out that there is nun (instead of hamzah) in some لخَلـوائِهِم As to manuscripts. In that case, it means a middleman’s tip or a soothsayer’s fee paid him as a bribe, and it means the presents of money made by

the rich to the impostor in return for his services, which he performs at the cost of his .faith

Al-hatm means breaking, and al-Majlisi says that breaking (of faith) here implies corruption and decadence (fasad). Khubrahu here is probably with a dammah on kha' and sukun on ba', in which case it means the capacity to cognize and discern. Though it is also probable that the word is khabarahu, with fathah on kha' and ba', in view of its consistency with the verb. The first meaning is more fitting, though the second one .is not without relevance

Al-Ka'abah means one's bad and shattered condition as a result of intense grief and .sadness

Tahannaka fi burnusihi means 'he put the taht al-hanak in his burnus. Burnus is a tall cap, which the devout used to wear during the early Islamic era, as mentioned by al-Jawhari in Sihah al-lughah. Al-Majlisi says, 'This phrase suggests that tahannuk is mustahabb in salat. Such an inference is questionable, because given the kind of dress that was worn by the devout it suggests only the istihbab of tahannuk in general, not particularly during salat. Yes, had burnus been part of a dress- specified .for salat such an inference would have been correct

Hindis means an intensely dark night, as pointed out by al-Jawhari. Hindis here is substitute for night (layl) and that which is probably implied here is the dark of the .night

In fa-shadda Allah arkanahu, shadd means providing strength and power :شَدَّ عَضُدَه: أی قَوَّاهُ Rukn means something on

p: ۶۱۹

رُكنُ الشَّیء جانِبُه الأقْوی ,which a thing stands and by which it is sustained. Al-Jawhari says .i.e. the rukn of a thing is its strongest side

Now, with our trust in God, we shall explain that which is essential and fitting in the .course of a few sections

Section ۱

You should know that the premises of a syllogism in relation to its conclusion, or the arguments and theoretical proofs in any discipline in relation to the proved result and inferred conclusion, have the position of preparatory preliminaries. They are neither totally independent of the conclusions nor totally unrelated to them. In this regard both the followers of predestination (jabr) as well as the adherents of freedom (tafwid) have gone astray and departed from the path of moderation, each of them .adopting an approach consistent with their doctrine

One of them (i.e. those who believe in tafwid) says that the preliminaries are independent and if the door of the World of the Hidden ('alam al ghayb) were to close and the emanations of the world of malakut to be shut off, man can derive conclusions unaided from the preliminaries themselves. The other (i.e. the believers in jabr) claims that the preliminaries are totally unrelated to the conclusions and the Divine tradition has been established to inspire the human mind with the conclusions. The preliminaries are only superficially connected to the conclusions and are absolutely unconnected in reality. Both of the views of these groups, like their basic doctrines, are false in the view of those

.who are acquainted with the true teaching and real knowledge

The truth, in conformity with the view of those who know it, is that the preliminaries have a preparatory relation with the conclusions and they prepare the soul for receiving knowledge through inspiration from its higher hidden sources (mabadi-ye 'aliyeh-yeghaybiyyeh). Here we don't intend to expound or refute these doctrines of these two groups, for that lies beyond the scope of our aim, and the purpose of mentioning them is only subsidiary to the exposition of another issue, which is as .follows

Having known that the knowledge and teachings are inspired by the invisible spheres and that inspiration is subject to the soul's connection (with these spheres), you :should know that, as pointed out by the hadith

لَيسَ العِلمُ بكَثرَهِ التَّعليمِ، بلْ هو نورٌ يقذِفُهُ بِقَلبِ منْ يَشَاءُ.

Knowledge is not extensive learning. Rather, it is a light that God casts in the heart of (whomever He wills.(١

Every soul that establishes a connection with the higher realm of malakut and the angelic sphere, receives such inspirations as are angelic in character and the knowledge that is cast into it is true knowledge from the angelic realm. Also, every soul that establishes a connection with the lower malakuti realm, the realm of the jinn, Satan, and evil spirits, receives inspirations that are satanic in character of the order .of compound ignorance and obscuring veils

This is why the urafa and the people of true knowledge consider spiritual purification, the purgation of intentions and motives

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.Bihar al-'anwar, i, ۲۲۵ -۱

and the rectification of one’s goals to be the first step in the path of acquisition of sciences, especially the Divine teachings and the sciences of the Shari’ah. Accordingly, they give the relevant advice and warnings to the students, for the link with the higher sources is strengthened through the purification of the soul. And that which the holy :Lord, Exalted and Glorious, says in the noble verse

(وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمْ اللَّهُ.)

(And fear God, and God shall teach you. (۲:۲۸۲

linking the Divine teaching to taqwa (God-fearing) is for this reason that taqwa purifies the soul and connects it to the invisible sacred realm. This is followed by Divine teaching and the rahmani inspirations, for there is no niggardliness in the higher realms, which are bounteous by necessity, in the same way as the Necessary-.Being-by-Essence is Necessary in all aspects

However, if the soul engages in acquiring the sciences due to attention to selfish motives, for better food and drink and for egoistic reasons, its goal becomes non-divine and the inspirations it receives are satanic in character. This is one of the foolproof criteria, which I think has not been mentioned by the urafa, for differentiating between rahmani and shaytani inspirations and most of the times one .is aware of this fact

The inspirations received by the impious soul full of impurities and obfuscations belong to the category of compound ignorance (i.e. to be ignorant and be ignorant of one’s ignorance), which is the incurable malady of the souls and the main impediment

on their path. That is because the criterion in knowledge is not acquaintance with general concepts and scientific terms. Rather, the criterion is the removal of veils from the soul's eye and opening of the door of the knowledge of God. The real knowledge is the guiding spiritual lamp that shows the straight path of nearness to .God and to the abode of His bliss

Everything other than this is vanity, though in the world of mulk and prior to the removal of the veils of carnal nature those conversant with it should be reckoned as scholars, gnostics and jurisprudents by those used to learned controversies and disputes. But once the blinds are removed from the eyes of the heart, once the curtains of the world of malakut are raised and once one wakes up from the heavy slumber of mulk and corporeal nature that (which once appeared to be knowledge and learning) will be found to be the darkest of veils. It will be found that all those branches of formal learning were all in all thick spiritual curtains each of them .separated from the other by vast distances and we were ignorant of this fact

النَّاسُ نَيامٌ، فإذا مَاتُوا انْتَبَهُوا.

(The people are asleep and they wake up on death.(۱

It is then that the real nature of our learned preoccupations is revealed to us. But that which is shameful and scandalous is that even after fifty years, or more or less, of learning and study we remain mistaken about ourselves, at

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.Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, Sharh al-sad kalimeh-ye qisar, ۵۴ -۱

.times imagining that our studies are for the sake of God

We remain unaware of the ruses of Satan and the self, for self-love is a thick veil that conceals our defects from ourselves. Hence the chaste awliya' and the noble Imams (A) have mentioned certain signs and marks of identification so that we may know and evaluate ourselves by their means without entertaining a baseless good opinion about ourselves. Later on in this exposition, we will refer to the signs and marks .mentioned in this noble tradition

We came to know that in a primarily classification the seekers of knowledge fall into two groups: those who have a divine aim and those who have a mundane one. It may be said that the ultimate goal of the latter group is ignorance (jahl), for the seeming knowledge that they acquire is compound ignorance in reality and a spiritual veil. The two groups mentioned by Imam al-Sadiq (A) in the tradition that we are expounding both belong to this class, for the seekers of domination as well as the impostors dwell .in ignorance and misguidance

Hence, it may be said that the ignorance mentioned by the Imam as a sign of the first group is something different from the ordinary meaning of ignorance. Rather, it either means muddling up issues and keeping people ignorant or it means the ignorance of one who pretends to be ignorant of the truth or is not ready to accept it. Both of these characteristics are also present

in the group afflicted with mira’ and jidal. They deny facts and well-established truths and adhere to ignorance for the sake of promoting their own opinions and marketing .their spurious and little in demand merchandise

Although in one classification the seekers of knowledge do not constitute more than two groups- that is, on the basis of a preliminary classification based on an affirmation or negation of the divine goal of knowledge - a further classification will show them to be more than three groups. As to their division into three groups by the Imam, it may be said that he wished to mention two major groups consisting of most of the victims of ignorance and misguidance. Thus in another tradition, we find that he :considers the seekers of knowledge as constituting two groups

الکَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ أَرَادَ الحَدِیثَ لِمَنْفَعَهِ الدُّنْیَا لَمْ یَکُنْ لَهُ فِی الآخِرَهِ نَصِیبٌ، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ بِهِ خَیْرَ الآخِرَهِ أَعْطَاهُ اللهُ خَیْرَ الدُّنْیَا وَالآخِرَهِ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “He who seeks (to learn) hadith for worldly benefit has no share in the Hereafter, and he who seeks it for a benefit in the Hereafter, God grants him benefit both in the world (and the Hereafter.”(١

Section ٢

We have mentioned the evils of mira’ and jidal earlier in the exposition of one of the holy traditions. However, it is also proper here that we mention some relevant traditions and describe a little of their evil effects. In

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.Al-Kafi, i, “kitab fadl al-ilm”, “bab al-musta’kil bi- ilmih”, hadith ٢ -١

the noble al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad the following tradition on the :(authority of Imam al-Sadiq (A

قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالمِرَاءَ وَالْخُصُومَهَ فَإِنَّهُمَا يُمْرِضَانِ الْقُلُوبَ عَلَى الإِخْوَانِ وَيَنْبُتُ عَلَيْهِمَا النِّفَاقُ.

Amir al-Mu'minin (A) said, "Beware of dispute and controversy, for they infect with enmity the hearts of brethren. They are the roots of hypocrisy (nifaq), out of which (hypocrisy grows."(١

:(There are other traditions in al-Kafi narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (A

عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْخُصُومَهَ فَإِنَّهَا تُشْغِلُ القَلْبَ وَتُورِثُ النِّفَاقَ وَتُكْسِبُ الضَّغَائِنَ.

Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said, "Beware of controversy, because it discomfits the heart, gives (rise to hypocrisy, and creates ill will within the heart."(٢

عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ جِبْرَئِيلُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إِيَّاکَ وَمُلاحَاهَ الرِّجَالِ.

Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said: Gabriel said to the Prophet (S): "Beware of getting entangled in (dispute and acrimonious debate with people."(٣

Now let us take up the explanation of the fact that dispute and acrimony in talk sicken the heart, create ill feeling between friends, and make hypocrisy grow within the heart. It was mentioned earlier that outward actions leave certain effects on the inner .self and the heart that are in accordance with their character

Here we must say that vicious actions have a more immediate and stronger impact on the heart. That is so because man is the offspring of the world of nature and the faculties of lust (shahwah), anger (ghadhab) and diabolism (shaytanah) accompany him and are active in him, as has

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.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-mira' wa al-khusumah", hadith ١ -١
.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-mira' wa al-khusumah", hadith ٨ -٢
.Al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-mira' wa al-khusumah", hadith ۶ -٣

:been mentioned in a tradition

إنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِی مَجْرَی الدَّمِ مِنْ بَنِی آدَمَ.

(Satan circulates in mankind like the blood in veins.(۱

Hence, the heart is directly confronted with corrupting elements and matters acclimatized to physical nature. Even a slight external assistance, either from one of the bodily organs or in the shape of an immoral and vicious companion, produces a strong effect on the heart. Therefore, there are warnings in the noble traditions :against keeping company with such persons

الكَافِی: عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِیرُ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: لا یَنْبَغِی لِلْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ أنْ یُوَاخِیَ الفَاجِرَ فَإنَّهُ یُزَیِّنُ لَهُ فِعْلَهُ وَیُحِبُّ أنْ یَکُونَ مِثْلَهُ وَلا یُعِینُهُ عَلَی أَمْرِ دُنْیَاهُ وَلا أَمْرِ مَعَادِهِ، وَمَدْخَلُهُ إلَیْهِ وَمَخْرَجُهُ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ شَیْنٌ عَلَیْهِ.

Al-Kafi reports on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (A) from Amir al-Mu'minin (A) that he said, "It does not behoove a Muslim to be on fraternal terms with an immoral person, for he makes his own acts appear fair to one and likes one to become like himself. He is of no assistance to one either in the matters of the world or the Hereafter and it is a matter of disgrace for one to have social intercourse with such a (person."(۲

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: لا یَنْبَغِی لِلْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ أنْ یُوَاخِیَ الفَاجِرَ وَلا الأَحْمَقَ وَلا الكَذَّابَ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "It is not proper for a Muslim to fraternize with an immoral (person, a fool, or a liar."(۳

An important point behind the prohibition on keeping company with sinful persons, or on presence in

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.Sunan al-Darimi, ii, ۳۲۰ -۱

.Al-Kafi, "kitab al-'ishrah", "bab man tukrahu mujalasatuh", hadith ۲ -۲

.Al-Kafi, "kitab al-'ishrah", "bab man tukrahu mujalasatuh", hadith ۳ -۳

a gathering where God is sinned against, or on befriending and mixing with the enemies of God, is the influence of their morals, states and acts on a person. More important from the viewpoint of such influence are one's own acts and their effect upon the heart, so that the perpetration of vicious acts even for a brief period produces a strong influence on the heart, freedom and relief from which is not .possible or attainable even after many long years

This indicates that should one indulge in dispute and hostile debate, not much time would pass before a terrible darkness and obfuscation appears in the heart, the outward verbal hostility soon leading to an inward hostility that is itself the greatest cause of hypocrisy, two-facedness and duplicity. Hence the evils of hypocrisy may be recognized through a recognition of the evils of mira' and jidal. Earlier, in the course of exposition of one of the traditions, we have described the evils of hypocrisy and two-facedness and there is no need to repeat that here.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) mentions certain signs and symptoms of the victims of ignorance and disputatiousness, one of which is causing harm to the people and being a vicious presence, which by itself is a vice and evil that is sufficient as an independent cause of :one's destruction. It is mentioned in a noble tradition of al-Kafi

مَنْ آذَی لِی وَلِیّاً فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِی بِالْمُحَارَبَهِ.

God Almighty says) Whoever torments a friend of Mine has challenged Me to) (battle.(۱)

The causing

۱- ۸ Al-Kafi, "kitab al-imnan wa al-kufr", "bab man adha al-Muslimin", hadith.

of harm and tormenting of the faithful has here been equated to declaration of war against God and hostility against His Sacred Being. The traditions relating to this topic .are too many to be included in this brief exposition

Another of the signs of this group has been mentioned to be mira', contesting of opinions and engagement in learned debates for the sake of domination and proving one's merit. As to making mira' the consequence of mira' in the tradition, it is possible that the first mira' is an inner quality and a vicious trait of the heart and the mira' that .has been mentioned as its consequence is its outward manifestation and symptom

Another of the symptoms of this group is its pretence of being forbearing while it is devoid of this quality. This is itself hypocrisy and two-facedness and involves riya' and shirk. Similarly, the pretence of humility (khushu') while being devoid of piety (wara') is .also another clear manifestation of shirk, riya', hypocrisy and two-facedness

This shows that this characteristic is possessed of great vices each of which is fatal and destructive. It is necessary that we undertake any kind of effort and hardship to deliver ourselves from this shameful, faith-killing and destructive malady of the heart and purge it of its darkness and filth, purifying it and burnishing it with the sincerity of intention and inner truthfulness. In this regard there is a point here which is enough to .shatter one when one reflects upon it for a while

It is that which Imam al-Sadiq (A) mentions after describing the signs of this group. :The Imam (A) says

فَدَقَّ اللهُ مِنْ هَذَا خَيْشُومَهُ وَقَطَعَ مِنْهُ حَيْزُومَهُ.

As a result, God crushes his nose and severs his waist (it may also be translated to (.mean: Hence, may God crush his nose and sever his waist

This is either a du'a (prayer or curse) or an indicative sentence (ikhbar). Whatever it should be, it is bound to take place. For should it be an indicative sentence, the reporter is a truthful speaker of attested veracity (sadiq al-musaddaq). Should it be a .du'a', it is the du'a' of a Ma'sum and a wali of Allah and is certain to be granted

Hence it is indicative of the certain humiliation and disgrace to befall such a man, and perhaps in both the worlds: in this world in front of those whose respect he wished to earn through ostentation and pretence of merit and which produce an opposite result by bringing him disgrace, reducing his worth, and earning him the contempt of those whom he sought to dominate and impress; and in the next world were he shall be humiliated and brought to shame in the presence of the archangels, prophets, .apostles, the infallible awliya' and God's righteous servants

So, woe to us: the victims of mira' and jidal, of carnal desires and hostilities! How great is our affliction at the hands of this vicious, heartless self which would not leave us alone unless it has brought us

damnation in all the stages of life and existence, and yet we never bother to reform it! !Our ears are closed with the stoppers of neglect

We refuse to awake from the heavy sleep of nature! O God, Thou art the reformer of Thy servants and the Master of their hearts. The being of all the existents lies in Thy power and the hearts of Thy creatures lie under the total influence of Thy will. We are not our own masters and have no power over our own benefit or harm, life or death. Do illuminate our dark hearts with the light of Thy grace and correct our vices with !Thy magnanimity and mercy and help these powerless and weak creatures of Thine

Section ۳

We said concerning the mention of mira' in the first part of the noble hadith that mira' has an inner spiritual being as well as is an outward phenomenon that is the product, sign and symptom of the first kind of mira'. Similarly, we may say concerning the second part of the description given by the Imam (A) that istitalah and khatl have an inner existence as a spiritual habit and quality, as well as an outward manifestation, .which is the result of that habit

Similarly, in most of the activities of the heart there are various levels: the level of enduring trait (malakah), the level of state (hal), and the level of outward behavior, which is the product of the inner trait. Thus those who have in

them the trait of istitalah, the urge for domination and ambition, as well as that for deception and imposture, they also carry its outward signs and symptoms, some of which have been mentioned in the tradition by Imam al-Sadiq (A).

One of them is deceit and imposture which make one present himself as pious and righteous while he is not such inwardly. This group of people are wolves in the garb of sheep and devils in the form of men. They are the worst of God's creatures and their harm to the people's faith is more than that of armies of opponents.

Another of the characteristics of this group is that they behave with humility and in a sycophantic manner with those who are the object of their greed. They spread their nets of imposture, sycophancy, and false humility to trap poor, weak people, to benefit from the sweetmeats of their love, admiration, and worldly respect.

For this purpose, they exploit their own religion, sell their faith, and make use of the mundane benefits that are available. This is the group of people about whom a tradition says that when some people in paradise see them they will say, "How is it that we came to paradise as a result of your teaching while you yourselves have been confined to hell?" They will answer, "We did not act according to what we spoke."[۱]

Another of their signs is that they behave haughtily with their likes who do not attract their greed

p: ۶۳۲

۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, xi, ۴۲۰.

and whom they consider as impediments in the way of their own advancement. They treat them with vanity and try as far as they can to humiliate them through words and deeds, for they are afraid that anyone of them can cause him trouble, which can lead .to a slump in their credibility

One should know that it is a most difficult thing to remain pious when one is in the formal dress of learning, zuhd, and taqwa and to preserve the purity of one's heart in the clerical profession. That is why if someone from this class should act according to his duties and go through its phases with sincerity, correct himself, and after reforming himself engage in reforming others, and protect the orphans in the descent of the Messenger (S), such a man is reckoned among the Outstrippers and the Near Ones (muqarrabun wa sabiqun). Such a thing has been said of four disciples of Imam al-Baqir (A) by Imam al-Sadiq (A). The following tradition is reported in al-Wasa'il from :'Rijal al-Kashshi with an isnad reaching up to Abu 'Ubaydah al-Hadhdha

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، يَقُولُ: زُرَارَهُ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ وَأَبُو بَصِيرٍ وَبُرَيْدٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِمْ: (وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ. أُوْلَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ.)

Abu 'Ubaydah says: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say: Zurarah, Muhammad ibn Muslim, Abu Basir, and Burayd (ibn Mu'awiyah) are amongst those concerning whom God, the (Exalted, said: "The Outstrippers, the Outstrippers- they are the Near Ones."(١

There are many traditions relating to this topic and

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, xviii, ١٠٥ -١

the excellences of the learned (ahl al-'ilm) are more than can be expressed. It suffices :to cite the following tradition of the Noble Prophet (S) about them

مَنْ جاءَهُ المَوْتُ وَهُوَ يَطْلُبُ العِلْمَ لِيُحْيِىَ بِهِ الإِسْلامَ كانَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الأَنْبِياءِ دَرَجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فِى الجَنَّهِ.

When death comes to one who is seeking knowledge to revive thereby Islam, there (will be only one degree between him and the prophets in Paradise.(١

Later on, insha' Allah, there will be occasion to describe their excellence. However, if, God forbid, should the seeker of knowledge depart from the path of sincerity and take the road of unrighteousness, he will be reckoned among the worst of God's creatures about whom there are strong and strange (condemning) expressions in the -.traditions

The first thing that the learned in religious sciences and the seekers of this perilous road must take into consideration is self-reform during the period of studies, counting it as far as possible to be the foremost of their duties, for this is harder and more .obligatory than all the duties and obligations dictated by Shari'ah and reason

O seekers of knowledge and spiritual excellences and teachings! Rise from your sleep and know that you have lesser room for excuse before God, and God Almighty shall call you to a tougher account. The level of your knowledge and works is very different .from that of other people

Your path (Sirat) is sharper and narrower and there will be a great scrutiny of the record of your life. Woe to the

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.Sunan al-Darimi, i, ١٠٠ -١

student and seeker of knowledge in whose heart learning creates darkness and obscurity! And we see in ourselves that if we have learnt some inadequate concepts and some futile terms, it has kept us from treading the divine path. Satan and the self have dominated our being and turned us away from the path of humanity and guidance. These absurd and senseless concepts became our biggest hindrance and .there is no remedy except to seek refuge in the Sacred Being of God Almighty

O God, we confess to our shortcomings and plead guilty to our sins! We did not take even a single step in the path of Thy good-pleasure nor did we perform a single act of worship and obedience with sincerity. Yet treat us with Thine all-inclusive mercy and Thine unbounded grace. In the same way as Thou concealed our inadequacies in this world, do cover them with Thy forgiveness and covering grace in the other world, !where we need it more

Here, too, it is essential to remember the point that we mentioned while expounding the earlier part of the noble tradition. That point concerns this utterance of the Imam :((A

فَأَعْمَى اللهُ عَلَى هَذَا خَبَرَهُ وَقَطَعَ مِنْ آثَارِ الْعُلَمَاءِ أَثَرَهُ.

As a result, God blinds his vision and wipes out his traces from the record of the .learned

That which is denoted by this statement, whether it be du’a’ or ikhbar, is certain to happen. One must be very fearful of this inner blindness of vision which is the main source

of all kinds of darkness and wretchedness. The blindness of the heart is the source of all misfortunes. Similarly, to be purged from the effects of the learned and to be deprived of their merits and gifts, apart from this deprivation itself, will be followed by an unimaginable humiliation and disgrace in the presence of God's elect on the Day of .Resurrection

Section ۴

As to the men of understanding and intellect—that is those for whom the goal of seeking knowledge is to become learned in Din and to know its truths—there are certain signs of which the main ones have been mentioned in the tradition. One of them is that knowledge creates grief, pain, and dejection. To be sure, this grief and dejection is not for the sake of the base and transitory worldly matters, but from the fear of the Return and the terror of falling short in the performance of duties and .service

This grief and dejection, besides illumining the heart, gives. it a purity and burnish. It becomes the original impulse for self-reform and commitment to the duties of servitude and creaturehood. The light of knowledge takes away quiet from the heart of the devotee introducing him to God and the abode of His bounties. He derives great pleasure from praying to God Almighty and spends his nights in wakefulness and in :performing the duties of devotion. Hence, the Imam (A) says

قَدْ تَحَنَّکَ فِی بُرْنُسِهِ وَقَامَ اللَّیْلَ فِی حِنْدِسِهِ.

The first sentence apparently indicates engagement in worship. Another sign of

this divine man of knowledge is that though fully attentive to the duties of servitude he is still in a state of trepidation. The light of knowledge reveals this to him that however much he may attend to his duties his efforts are still inadequate and wanting, that he cannot entirely fulfill the requirements of gratitude and true worship. :This realization fills his heart with terror and it is about such people that God has said

(إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ.)

(Even so only those of His servants fear God who have knowledge. (٣٥:٢٨

The light of knowledge brings trepidation and grief, and though such a person is cognizant of his commitment to self-reform, the fear of the Return does not let him rest. He beseeches God to reform him and is afraid of becoming preoccupied with other-than-God. He shuns the people, fearing lest they should keep him from the path of God and the journey towards the world of the Hereafter, by making the world and its pleasures appear alluring to him. Thereupon God confirms such a person and strengthens the supports that sustain his being, and grants him amnesty on the Day .of Resurrection

فَيَا لَيْتَنَا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ فَنَفُوزَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً.

Oh, would that we had been with them, then should we have achieved a great !success

And all praise is ultimately God's, at the beginning and the end, and may God's .benedictions be upon Muhammad and the Pure Ones of his progeny

Twenty Fourth Hadith: The Classification Of Sciences

point

بِالسَنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى أَفْضَلِ المُحَدِّثِينَ وَأَقْدَمِهِمْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ

رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الحَسَنِ وَعَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ عُبَيْدِاللهِ بْنِ عَبْدِاللهِ الدِّهْقَانِ عَنْ دُرُسْتَ الوَاسِطِيِّ عَنْ إبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ عَبْدِالحَمِيدِ عَنْ أَبِى الحَسَنِ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: دَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ المَسْجِدَ فَإذَا جَمَاعَةٌ قَدْ أَطَافُوا بِرَجُلٍ فَقَالَ: مَا هَذَا؟ فَقِيلَ: عَلَّامَةٌ. فَقَالَ: وَمَا العَلّامَةُ؟ فَقَالوا لَهُ: أَعْلَمُ النَّاسِ بِأَنْسَابِ العَرَبِ وَوَقَائِعِهَا وَأَيَّامِ الجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَالأَشْعَارِ العَرَبِيَّةِ. فَقَال النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: ذَاكَ عِلْمٌ لا يَضُرُّ مَنْ جَهِلَهُ وَلا يَنْفَعُ مَنْ عَلِمَهُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إنَّمَا العِلْمُ ثَلاثَةٌ: آيَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ أَوْ فَرِيضَةٌ عَادِلَةٌ أَوْ سُنَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ، وَمَا خَلاهُنَّ فَهُوَ فَضْلٌ.

With my chain of transmission reaching up to the best and the earliest of traditionists, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and 'Ali ibn Muhammad, from Sahl ibn Ziyad, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa-, from 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abd Allah al Dihqan, from Durust al-Wasiti, from Ibrahim ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from Abu al-Hasan Musa (A) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) once entered the mosque where there were a group of people surrounding a man. “Who is that?” inquired the Prophet (S). He was told, “He is an Allamah, (i.e. a very learned man).” “What is an Allamah?” asked the Prophet (S). They told him, “He is the most learned of men regarding Arab genealogies, past episodes, the days of the Jahiliyyah and Arabic poetry.” The Prophet (S) said, “That is a knowledge whose ignorance does not harm one nor

is its possession of any benefit to one." Then the Prophet (S) declared, "Verily, knowledge consists of these three: the firm sign, the just duty and the established (sunnah. All else is superfluous."(١)

Exposition

مَا هَذَا .Who is that?) in some manuscripts) مَا هَـذَا Who is he?) instead of) مَن هَـذَا There is might have been said to express contempt. Allamah is a derivative (sighah) that expresses extremeness (mubalaghah) and its ta is for the sake of (further) .'exaggeration. It means 'very very knowledgeable

who) is used for questioning concerning a) مَنْ You should know that in logic the word what) for questioning concerning a given reality or for) مـا person and the word explaining an abstract noun. Since they told the Noble Messenger (S) that this man is an Allamah, that master questioned them concerning the meaning of Allamah in relation to the character and content of the knowledge that they attributed to him. Epithets are at times made a means for .ما Hence, he put the question with the word questioning concerning essence, for instance, where the meaning of an attribute is .known but not the person to whom the attribute relates

But if the .مَن العَلَّامَهُ and it becomes مَنْ In that case, the question is nut by using the word person be known and the attribute be unknown, or when the purpose be only to know and the question then relates to ما the attribute, the question is put with the word finding out the attribute, not the person

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.Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, i, "kitab fadl al-'ilm", "bab sifat al-'ilm wa fadluh", hadith no. ١ -١

attributed with it, nor the attribute and the person attributed with it as well. In this noble tradition, since it was remarked that this man is an 'Allamah, the Prophet's purpose behind the question was to find out the meaning of the attribute that they ascribed to the man. Hence, he asked, 'What is an Allamah?' and not, 'Who is an 'Allamah?' or 'Why and for what reason is this man an 'Allamah?'

The explanation given above is clearer than what the authority (muhaqqiq) among the philosophers and the philosopher among the authorities, Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Q) says in his exposition of this noble tradition, which we shall refrain from citing due to fear of prolixity and for its being outside the scope of our discussion.

Section ۱

We have mentioned earlier that man, to put it briefly, is confronted with three worlds, stations and phases of life: first, the world of the Hereafter, which is the hidden world ('alam al-ghayb) of spirituality and the intellect; second, the phase of Barzakh, which is the world of khayal lying between the other two worlds; third, the phase of this world, the domain of mulk (corporeality) and the world of appearance ('alam al-shahadat).

Each of these phases has its own special perfection and training and requires action appropriate to it. The prophets (A) have been encharged to instruct the people concerning those actions. Hence all beneficial sciences are divisible into these three 'ulum (sciences): the 'ilm (science) that relates to the excellences (kamalat) of the intellect and

spiritual duties, the science that relates to the acts of the heart and its duties, and the science that relates to bodily acts and the duties of the self's outward life.

As to the sciences that play a strengthening and educative role in the sphere of the spirit and immaterial intellect, they consist of the knowledge of the sacred Essence of God and that of His attributes of Beauty and Majesty, as well as the knowledge of the immaterial hidden spheres, including the angels of all kinds, from those of the higher levels of the higher jabarut and higher malakut to the lower levels of the lower malakut and the earthly angels and the armies of God, Glorious and Exalted, in addition to the knowledge of the prophets and the awliya' and their stations and degrees, the knowledge of the revealed scriptures, the character of the descent of revelation (wahy), angels and the Spirit, as well as the knowledge of the world of the Hereafter and the character of the Return of the creatures to the world of ghayb, the reality of the world of Barzakh and Resurrection with their details, and, in a word, the knowledge of the origin (mabda') of existence, its reality and degrees, with its expansion (bast) and contraction (qabd), and its manifestation (zuhur) and return (ruju'). The bearers of this knowledge, after the prophets and the awliya' (A) are the philosophers and the masters among the hukama', the 'urafa' and the mystics.

The sciences that deal with

the discipline and education of the heart and its esoteric actions consist of the knowledge of moral dispositions that lead to salvation (munjiyat) or perdition (muhlikat). That is the knowledge of moral virtues, such as forbearance (sabr), gratefulness (shukr), shame (haya'), humility (tawadu'), resignation (rida), courage (shuja'ah), generosity (sakhawah), piety (wara') God-fearing (taqwa) and other moral excellences and the knowledge of the ways and means of acquiring them and their related causes and conditions, as well as the knowledge of moral vices, such as envy (hasad), pride (kibr), enmity (hiqd), deceptiveness (ghishsh), the love of position, the love of the world and the self, etc., and the knowledge of their causes and the ways of obtaining freedom from them. The bearers of this knowledge, too, after the prophets and their designated successors (awliya') (A) are the experts in the science of ethics .and the learned in the spiritual disciplines and mystic teachings

The science that deals with the education of the exoteric being and its disciplining consists of the science of fiqh, its preliminaries, and the science of etiquette (adab), social intercourse (mu'asharat), management of home (tadbir al-manzil), and politics or civic administration (siyasat al-mudun). The bearers of this knowledge are the learned in the exoteric (ulama' al-zahir,) the fuqaha' (legists) and the muhaddithun .((traditionists), after the prophets and the awsiya' (A

You should know that each of these threefold human spheres mentioned are interrelated in such a manner that the influence of each of them-whether it is positive or negative-percolates to

the others. For instance, if one takes upon himself the performance of the duties of worship and exoteric rites as one should perform them in accordance with the prescriptions of the prophets that will produce effects in his spirit and his heart, .improving his moral character and perfecting his beliefs and convictions

Similarly, if one should engage in his moral improvement and the beautification of his inward being (batin), that will produce a positive effect in the other two spheres. ۵o also the development of one's faith and the strengthening of beliefs is effective in the other two stations. This is on account of the very intimate connection between these different stations. In fact (they are so closely related that) the word 'connection' also fails to express it fully. Hence one must say that they are a single reality with .(different) manifestations and aspects

Thus, development and perfection in each of the three stations is interlinked. Hence no one should imagine that he can acquire a perfect faith and a refined moral character without performing exoteric works and bodily worship, or that when his moral character (khulq) is defective and unrefined his conduct can be complete and whole and his faith perfect, or that without faith in his heart his exoteric acts can be .complete and his moral excellences can be perfect

When one's bodily (exoteric) actions are defective and not in conformity with the prescriptions of the prophets, that gives rise to obfuscations within the heart and ,obscurities in the soul

which obstruct the light of faith and conviction. Similarly, if one has base moral .dispositions in the heart, they obstruct the light of faith from entering it

Hence, it is essential for the wayfarer of Hereafter and the straight path of humanity to pay an acute care and attention to each of these three aspects and to reform and exercise himself in their regard and not to neglect any of the theoretical and practical excellences. He should not imagine that sole refinement of moral character or sole strengthening of beliefs or sole conformity to the exoteric aspect is sufficient for him, .as believed by some experts of each of these three disciplines

For instance, the Shaykh al-Ishraq, at the beginning of his work Hikmat al-'ishraq, divides the perfect into these three categories: those who are perfect in knowledge and action, those who are perfect in action, and those who are perfect in knowledge. This suggests as if perfection of knowledge can coexist with inadequacy of action or vice versa. Moreover, he considers those who are perfect in knowledge to be the felicitous sincere linked with the world of ghayb and immateriality, treading the path .of the highest heavens ('Illiyyun) and associating with the archangels

There are some scholars of morals and esoteric science who consider the attainment of moral moderation and the refinement of the heart and esoteric acts as the source of all excellences and attach no worth to intellectual truths and exoteric rules. On the contrary, they even consider

them as thorns on the wayfarer's path. There are some scholars of the esoteric aspect who consider the intellectual and the esoteric sciences and mystic teachings .as perfidy and infidelity and are hostile to their scholars and students

Each of these three groups, who hold these false beliefs, are withheld from each of the three spiritual stages and all the three spheres of genuine human existence. They have not rightly reflected concerning the sciences of the prophets and the awliya' and hence there has always been antagonism between them. Hence, each of them attacks the others considering them as pursuing falsehood, although it is incorrect to separate the stages. In a sense, each one of them is right in repudiating the others, not because their learning or action is wholly invalid, but because the limits set by them for the various human levels and their confining of human knowledge and .excellences exclusively to their own discipline is contrary to fact

The Noble Messenger (S) has in this noble tradition divided the sciences into these three parts, and there is no doubt that these threefold sciences pertain to these threefold planes. This claim is testified to by the divine scriptures, the traditions of the prophets and the Infallible Imams (A) for their teachings are classifiable into these three classes. One of them consists of the knowledge of God, angels, scriptures, the Messengers and the Last Day, and the heavenly scriptures-especially the all-inclusive .divine scripture, the Lord's Holy Qur'an-are all full of it

,Rather

it may be said that that which the Book of God teaches more than anything else is this class of knowledge. It consists of the call to God as the origin and end (mabda' wa ma'ad) of all creation through valid rational arguments and with perfect clarification, as pointed out by the authorities. In fact the other two aspects occupy a somewhat lesser position in the Book of God in comparison to this aspect, and the ahadith of the Imams (A), too, are full of it and beyond enumeration, as will become clear by a reference to reliable books which are accepted by all the Imams (R) such as the noble .al-Kafi and al-Saduq's Kitab al-Tawhid

Similarly, the attention given to spiritual refinement and moral reform and moderation in the Book of God and the traditions narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt (A) is beyond what one would expect. However, these books and these chapters have remained in oblivion, without receiving the due attention and credence by us, unfortunate ones in the bondage of futile hopes and expectations! The day will come when God Almighty will question us and establish His accusation against us on the basis of their evidence and the Immaculate Imams (A) -may God be our refuge- will dissociate themselves from us due to our abandoning their traditions and sciences. I seek refuge in God, the .Exalted, from wretchedness of the ultimate outcome and an evil end

As to the traditions relating to fiqh and exoteric rites, it need not

be said that all our books are full of them. Thus, we come to know that the sciences of the Shari'ah are confined to these three kinds in accordance with the needs of man and the threefold human aspects. None of the scholars of any one of these sciences has a right to find fault with the others. It is not right to repudiate a science if one is ignorant of one of these sciences and to be irreverent towards one who is learned in it. In the same way as a sound intellect considers the affirmation of something that one does not know as an ethical vice, so also is the denial of something one has no .conception of; rather the latter attitude is worse and more vicious

If God, Blessed and Exalted, should ask, for instance, "You did not know the meaning of the unity of being (wahdat al-wujud) in accordance with the doctrine of the hukama' and neither did you receive instruction concerning it from those adept in it, nor did you study that science and its preliminaries. Then why did you blindly accuse them of unbelief and insult them?" What answer shall one have to give in God's sacred presence except bending down one's head in shame? Of course, a pretext such as "I thought it to be so" will not be acceptable. Every discipline has certain essentials and preliminaries, without whose knowledge it is not possible to understand its conclusions. This is especially true of such

a subtle issue as this whose actual reality and meaning is not well understood even after a lifetime of effort, and here you are who want to apprehend with your inadequate intellect after reading, for instance, a book or two or some verses out of al-Rumi's Mathnawi something the philosophers and the hukama' have been discussing for several thousand years and dissecting its issues. Obviously, you will not :make anything out of it

رَحِمَ اللّهُ امْرَءاً عَرَفَ قَدْرَهُ وَلَمْ يَتَعَدَّ طَوْرَهُ.

May God have mercy upon the man who knows his own worth and does not (transgress his limits.(١

Similarly, if a pseudo-philosopher or mystic were to be asked, 'On what religious basis did you call the fuqaha' superficial and extroversive, finding fault with them or, rather, with a branch of religious sciences brought by the prophets (A) from the Lord of all lords for the perfection of human souls, denying its worth and insulting them? On what rational and shar'i grounds did you consider affront towards a group of scholars and legists as permissible?" What answer will he offer in the presence of God, Blessed and Exalted, except bowing his head in shame and discredit? In any case let us leave .this irksome part to pass on to the rest of the discourse

Section ٢

Having known that the threefold sciences referred to by the Noble Messenger (S) are the same as the three mentioned above, the question remains as to how each of these expressions corresponds with each of these sciences. Although this matter

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١- Al-'Amili, Ghurar al-hikam, "bab al-ra'."

is not of much importance -for that which is important in this regard is the understanding of the principles of these sciences themselves and the effort to learn .them but it is essential for the exposition of the noble tradition

The eminent ulama (R) who have undertaken the exposition of this noble tradition have differed among themselves, and to preoccupy ourselves with the differences of their opinions and their examination will needlessly prolong our discussion. Hence, I will confine myself in this regard to what appears to me, with all my inadequacy, to be correct, citing such supporting evidence as has not been mentioned (by anyone). Thereafter I will mention an important point mentioned by our revered shaykh, the .perfect 'arif, Shahabadi, may his shadow over our heads endure forever

You should know that the expression 'firm sign' (ayatun muhkamah) implies the rational sciences and the true doctrines and divine teachings. 'Just duty' (faridatun 'adilah) implies the science of ethics and self-purification. 'Established sunnah' (sunnatun qa'imah) refers to the science of the exoteric aspect and the bodily conduct (i.e. involving some kind of physical activity). The reason for this correlation is that the word 'ayah' means 'sign' and is appropriate for the rational and doctrinal sciences, for they deal with the signs of the Divine Essence, Names, Attributes and other matters, .and there is no precedent of the use of the word ayah for other sciences

For example, in the Book of God, in many cases, after offering proofs for the sacred

existence of the Creator or the Names and Attributes of His sacred Essence, or for the existence of Resurrection and its characteristics, or the world of Ghayb and Barzakh, such a statement as this follows as a reminder: "This is a sign" or "These are signs for those who think" or "These are signs for those who have intellects". Ayah is a word whose use in relation to these sciences and teachings is quite common. But should the sentence "This is a sign" be mentioned following the mention of a legal or ritual issue .or after an ethical principle, that would obviously not be devoid of impropriety

Hence, we learn that ayah, sign and mark is something that is appropriate for and special to the (intellectual and spiritual) sciences related to doctrine ('ulum al-ma'arif). Similarly, the characterization of ayah as muhkam (firm, unambiguous, precise) is also in conformity with these sciences, for these sciences are subject to intellectual criteria and based on firm rational proofs (burhan al-muhkam). However, the other sciences, .in accordance with their character, do not possess firm and steady rational proofs

The reason for considering the expression faridatun 'adilah (just duty) as referring to the science of ethics is the characterization of duty as 'adilah (lit. just, moderate, balanced). That is because virtue (khulq al-hasan), as established in that science, consists of keeping distance from either of the two extremes of excess and neglect (ifrat and tafrit) and each of the two extremes of excess and neglect

is blameworthy, and justice (‘adalah), which signifies the golden mean and the point of moderation between them, is praiseworthy.

For example, courage (shuja’ah), which is one of the principal virtues and a moral excellence, is represented by the middle point and moderate position between the extremes of rashness (tahawwur, which is absence of fear in situations where fear is proper) and timidity (jubn), which amounts to being afraid in situations where fear is improper.

So, also, wisdom (hikmah), which is also a principal moral virtue, consists of the middle point between the vice of cunning (jurbuzah), which is the use of the thinking faculty in matters it is improper to use it, and the vice of stupidity, which is suspension of the thinking faculty in matters where it should be used. Similarly, continence (‘iffah) and generosity (sakhawah) are virtues represented by the middle position between the vices of covetousness (sharah) and apathy (khumud) and between prodigality (israf) and stinginess (bukhl) respectively.

Thus the attachment of the adjective ‘adilah to faridah indicates that the expression faridatun ‘adilah corresponds to the science of ethics (akhlaq). Moreover, the term faridah by itself affirms such a connotation, for since faridah here-which has been put here in opposition to sunnah, signifying the third part of knowledge-is something which can be known by the means of the intellect, as is the actual case in the science of ethics (‘ilm al-’akhlaq), contrary to sunnah which refers to matters where the criterion is pure obedience (ta’abbud) and which the

intellect is incapable of apprehending. And that is why we have said that the expression sunnatun qa’imah refers to the science, which deals with the acts of .obedience and the rites of the Shari’ah, which have been called ‘sunnah’ here

Their general nature is such that the intellect is incapable of apprehending their rationale and the Sunnah is the only means of proving and apprehending them. So, also, the use of the adjective qa’imah in characterizing sunnah here is also congenial to the obligations (wajibat) of the Shari’ah, for it is common, as well as correct, to speak of the iqamah (establishment) of wajibat and the iqamah of salat, zakat and so on. This word (i.e. iqamah) is not used in the other two sciences and its usage therein would be incorrect. This is all that can be said in regard to correlation on the basis of .congenialities

وَالعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللهِ.

.And all knowledge is with God

Section ٣

Now we shall mention the point that we promised to discuss. It is this that in the noble tradition the science of doctrines and ma’arif has been referred to as ayah and ayah means sign, symbol, and mark. The point that relates to this term is that if the doctrinal sciences and doctrinal truths are studied for their own sake and if all the related concepts, terms, high-sounding expressions, and embellished juxtapositions of terms be learned for the sake of showing off to feeble minds and for the sake of obtaining worldly status, then they

cannot be called ayat muhkamat; rather they must be named obscuring veils and .hollow fantasies

That is because if one's purpose in learning the sciences should not be to reach God, the Exalted, and to realize the Names and Attributes and to mould one's self in accordance with the Divine character (takhalluq bi akhlaq Allah), each of such acquisitions of his is a dungeon of hell and a black veil that darkens his heart and :blinds his insight, making him one of those to whom this noble verse applies

(وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِی فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى.)

But whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrowness, (and on the Resurrection Day We shall raise him blind. (۲۰:۱۲۴

Then he will find himself blind in that world and will complain to God saying, "O my Lord, why hast thou raised me blind, while I was blessed with sight in that world?" The answer will come: "You were blind in that world too, for you did not see Our signs and you neglected them." The criterion for sight in the world of the Hereafter is the vision and insight of the heart; the body as well as its faculties there are totally subject to the heart and the intellect (lubb). (The body being an image of the soul in that world), the conformity of an image to its object shall be complete and the image of something .deaf, blind and dumb is such

Hence, one should not

imagine that those who are well-versed in concepts, terms and expressions and have books and writings by heart are those who have the knowledge of God, the angels and the Last Day! If their learning is a sign and mark, why has it not produced its luminous effect in their own hearts? Why has it even increased the darkness of their heart and the corruption of their morals and conduct? The Noble Qur'an has :mentioned the criterion for identifying the genuine Mama' when it says

(إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ.)

(Even so only those of His servants fear God who have knowledge. (۳۵:۲۸

The fear of God is the specific characteristic of the ulama (the learned) and every one who does not possess the fear of God, the Exalted, is outside the ranks of the ulama. Now let us consider ourselves. Is there any trace of that fear in us? If there is, why ?does it not show any effect in our outward personality

In the noble al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad the following tradition on the :authority of Abu Basir

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ (أَوْ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ) يَقُولُ: كَانَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: يَا طَالِبَ العِلْمِ، إِنَّ العِلْمَ ذُو فَضَائِلَ كَثِيرَةٍ: فَرَأْسُهُ التَّوَاضُعُ، وَعَيْنُهُ البَرَاءَةُ مِنَ الحَسَدِ، وَأُذُنُهُ الفَهْمُ، وَلِسَانُهُ الصِّدْقُ، وَحِفْظُهُ الفَحْصُ، وَقَلْبُهُ حُسْنُ النِّيَّةِ، وَعَقْلُهُ مَعْرِفَةُ الأَشْيَاءِ وَالأُمُورِ، وَيَدُهُ الرَّحْمَهُ، وَرِجْلُهُ زِيَارَةُ العُلَمَاءِ، وَهِمَّتُهُ السَّلامَهُ، وَحِكْمَتُهُ الوَرَعُ، وَمُسْتَقَرُّهُ النَّجاهُ، وَقَائِدُهُ العَافِيَهُ، وَمَرْكَبُهُ الوَفَاءُ، وَسِلاحُهُ لِينُ الكَلِمَهِ، وَسَيْفُهُ الرِّضَا، وَقَوْسُهُ المُدَارَاهُ، وَجَيْشُهُ مُحَاوَرَهُ العُلَمَاءِ، وَمَالُهُ الأَدَبُ، وَذَخِيرَتُهُ اجْتِنَابُ

الذَّنُوبِ، وَزَادُهُ المَعْرُوفُ، وَمَاؤُهُ المُوَادَعَهُ، وَدَلِيلُهُ الهُدَى، وَرَفِيقُهُ مَحَبَّهُ الأَخْيَارِ.

Abu Basir) says: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) —Abu Ja'far, according to another) manuscript— say: Amir al-Mu'minin (A) used to say: "O seeker of knowledge, knowledge has many merits. (If you imagine it to be a human being then) its head is humility, its eye is freedom from envy, its ear is understanding, its tongue is truthfulness, its memory is research, its heart is good intention, its intellect is the knowledge (ma'rifah) of things and matters, its hand is compassion, its foot is visiting the learned, its resolution is integrity, its wisdom is piety, its abode is salvation, its helmsman is well-being, its mount is faithfulness, its weapon is softness of speech, its sword is satisfaction (rida), its bow is tolerance, its army is discussion with the learned, its wealth are refined manners, its stock is abstinence from sins, its provision for journey is virtue, its drinking water is gentleness, its guide is Divine guidance, and its (companion is the love of the elect."(١)

These are the signs of the ulama and the effects of 'ilm mentioned by Amir al-Mu'minin (A). Hence, if one is learned in the traditional sciences but is devoid of these things, he must know that he has not partaken of knowledge. Rather he is one of the ignorant and lost ones and in the other world his concepts and his wares of learning, each of which embodies compound ignorance, will become darkening blinders for him and

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.Al-Kulayni, op. cit., "bab al-nawadir", hadith no. ٣ -١

.his regret on the Day of Resurrection shall be the greatest of regrets

Hence the criterion in knowledge is that it should be sign, symbol and mark (of the Divine), and there should be no ego or egoism in it. Egoism gets dissolved and obliterated in knowledge, instead of it itself becoming a cause for vanity, narcissism, ostentation and arrogance. The noble tradition further characterizes the ayah as muhkamah, because true knowledge with its light and luminosity creates conviction in .the heart and wipes away doubt and uncertainty

It may happen that a man spends all his life in the study of the preliminaries and proofs and commits to mind several proofs and numerous arguments in support of each of the divine doctrines and overwhelms his associates in debates and controversies, without that knowledge producing any effect in his heart. Such a man not only does not achieve conviction, even his learning multiplies his doubts, uncertainties, and ambiguities. Hence, the mere collection of concepts and abundance of terms has no benefit. Rather it makes the heart preoccupied with non-God and the .learned man forgetful and negligent of God's Sacred Being

My dear, the remedy-or rather the complete remedy-is that if one wants his learning to be divine he should purify his intention and purpose with all the seriousness and effort that he can muster while entering upon the study of any branch of knowledge. The capital of salvation and the fountainhead of all grace lies in the purification of intent and the

:sincerity of purpose

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ للهِ أَرْبَعِينَ صَبَاحاً جَرَتْ يَنَابِيعُ الحِكْمَهِ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ.

Whoever devotes himself in sincerity to God for forty days, the springs of wisdom flow (out from his heart to his tongue.(١

Such are the effects and benefits of forty day's sincerity (ikhlas)! But here we are with forty years or more spent in the effort at collecting terms and concepts related to every discipline. You consider yourself to be an Allamah in the sciences and count yourself among the army of God, yet you do not find any trace of wisdom in your own heart nor a drop of it on your tongue. You should know that your learning and labor .have not been with a sincerity of intention

Rather, you have labored for the sake of Satan and selfish desire. Now that you see that these sciences have not produced any spiritual quality or state in you, make an effort to cultivate sincerity of intention and purify your heart from obscurities and vices. If you see any result, go on. And even though the mere motive of experimenting is inimical to sincerity, it is possible that the effort may open a window and the .incoming light may guide you

In any case, my dear, you stand in need of the true divine doctrines and the veritable sciences as well as good morals and righteous works. At whatever level you may stand, endeavor to increase your sincerity and purge the egoistic fancies and satanic .insinuations from the heart

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.See 'Allamah Bahr al-'ulum's Risalah f'i al-sayr wa al-suluk, ۲۲-۲۳, footnote -۱

Of course, that will produce results for you and you will find the way to the reality, and the path of guidance will open for you. May God, Blessed and Exalted, succor you. (‘rod knows, if we should depart from this world with this false and futile learning, these degenerate fancies and depraved morals of ours to the next world, what tribulations and calamities will await us and what narrow passages and what dungeons of hell we shall have to encounter and what darkness, what terrors and !flames this learning and morals of ours shall prepare for us

Section ۴

The authority amongst philosopher, Sadr al-Hukama’ al-Muta’allihin (Head of the philosophers and theosophists, viz. Mullah Sadra) —may God sanctify his soul and reward him abundantly— in Sharh Usul al-Kafi gives a long quotation from Shaykh Ghastly in which the latter has classified the sciences into ‘worldly’ and ‘Hereafterly’ ones, putting the science of fiqh amongst the ‘worldly’ sciences and dividing the sciences of Hereafter into the sciences of mukashafah (mystic intuition and apprehension) and mu’amalah (social intercourse, conduct, transactions; in Ghastly, .(the science of moral purification and spiritual cultivation

He considers the science of mu’amalah as the knowledge of the states of the heart and the science of mukashafah as a light that is attained in the heart after it is purified from blameworthy characteristics. Through that light realities are discovered, to the extent that true knowledge of the Divine Being, Names and Attributes as well as Acts and the wisdom underlying them is

.acquired and other truths are known

Now since this authority (i.e. Mullah Sadra) accepted this classification, he says in the exegesis of the hadith under exposition that, "Apparently this classification and limitation made by the Noble Messenger (S) pertains to the sciences of mu'amalat. For it is these sciences that most of the people derive benefit from. But the sciences of mukashafah are attained by a small number of people and they are rarer than the philosopher's stone (kibrit al-ahmar), as is also indicated by the ahadith of "Kitab al-'iman wa al-ku'fr that will come hereafter." This was a condensed translation of his .statements

This writer says: There is an ambiguity in Shaykh Ghazali's statements, and if they be presumed to be admissible then there remains another thing objectionable in the statements of the Akhund, i.e. Mullah Sadra, (M). As to the objection pertaining to his statement-on the basis of assumption of validity of Ghazali's statements-it lies in this that Ghastly has considered the science of mu'amalat as pertaining to the states of the heart; that is, those qualities which result in redemption, such as patience, gratitude, fear, hope and so on, as well as those which lead to perdition, such as .malice, envy, deceptiveness, imposture and so on

Accordingly, the threefold sciences mentioned by the Messenger of God (S) cannot all pertain to the sciences of mu'amalat; rather only one of them, i.e. faridatun 'adilah, as explained in detail earlier, corresponds to them. However, there are two objectionable things in

.Shaykh Ghazali's statements

Firstly, he has considered 'ilm al-fiqh as belonging to worldly sciences and the fuqaha' as worldly scholars, whereas it is one of the most valuable sciences of the Hereafter. And this ambiguity arises from self-love and the love of the discipline one of whose experts he imagines himself to be, i.e. the science of ethics, in the commonly used .sense

Accordingly, he has repudiated the other disciplines, including the rational sciences (such as philosophy). Secondly, he conceives mukashafat as forming a part of the 'ulum and includes them in his classification of them. This is contrary to fact, for that which is right is to consider as 'ilm that which is subject to inquiry, thought and proof .and wherein ratiocination has a role

The mukashafat and mushahadat are at times the result of the study of the sciences of doctrines ('ulum al-haqiqiyyah) and at times the consequence of spiritual acts (a'mal al-qalbiyyah). To be brief, mushahadat, mukashafat and realization of the realities of the Names and the Attributes should not be included in the classification of .science. These and the 'ulum are separate things, and this is quite plain

Section ۵

You should know that many of the sciences, from a certain aspect, fall under one of the categories mentioned by the Noble Messenger (S). For instance, the sciences of medicine, anatomy, astronomy, astrology and the like, when looked upon as Divine signs and symbols, and the science of history and the like, when looked upon as a means for drawing

lesson, are included in ayatun mukhamah, for by their means the knowledge of God or the knowledge of Resurrection is attained or confirmed. At times, the learning of the sciences falls under faridatun ‘adilah and at times under sunnatun qa’imah. But if their pursuit should be for their own sake or for other purposes and if they should lead us to neglect the ‘ulum of the Hereafter, they become blame worthy by accident .(madhmum bi al-’arad) on account of this neglect

Otherwise, (in themselves) they are neither beneficial nor harmful, as pointed out by the Noble Messenger (S). Thus, all the sciences are divisible into three kinds: first, those sciences, which are beneficial to man in view of the other stages of existence, success wherein is the ultimate purpose of creation. This is the category, which the ultimate Prophet has considered as ‘ilm, dividing it into three parts. The second kind consists of those which are harmful for man and lead him to neglect his essential duties. This kind consists of the blameworthy sciences-such as magic, jugglery, .alchemy and the like- and one must refrain from their pursuit

Thirdly, there are those which are neither harmful nor beneficial, like those which one pursues in his hours of leisure for amusement’s sake, such as mathematics, geometry, astronomy and the like. It would be much better if one could relate the pursuit of these sciences to the threefold ‘ulum (mentioned by the Prophet), otherwise it is better to refrain from, them as

.far as is possible

That is because when a sensible person knows that he cannot acquire all the sciences and achieve all the excellences due to shortness of life, scarcity of time and abundance of obstacles and accidents, he would reflect about the sciences and devote himself to the acquisition of. those which are more beneficial for him. Of course, amongst the sciences that which is better than all the rest is that which is beneficial for man's eternal and everlasting life and that is the science which the prophets (A) have commanded and encouraged man to seek. That science consists of .the threefold 'ulum, as mentioned. And all praise belongs to Allah, the Exalted

Twenty-Fifth Hadith: Satanic Insinuation

point

بِسَنَدى الْمُتَّصِلِ إلَى شَيْخِ الْمُحَدِّثِينَ وَأَفْضَلِهِمْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ قَالَ: ذَكَرْتُ لِأَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ رَجُلاً مُبْتَلىً بِالْوُضُوءِ وَالصَّلاهِ وَقُلْتُ: هُوَ رَجُلٌ عَاقِلٌ. فَقَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: وَأَىُّ عَقْلٍ لَهُ وَهُوَ يُطِيعُ الشَّيْطَانَ؟ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: وَكَيْفَ يُطِيعُ الشَّيْطَانَ؟ فَقَالَ: سَلْهُ، هَذَا الَّذِى يَأْتِيهِ مِنْ أَىِّ شَىْءٍ هُوَ؟ فَإِنَّهُ يَقُولُ لَكَ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ.

Through my continuous chain of transmitters reaching up to the shaykh of the traditionists and the best of them, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (M) who reports from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ibn Mahbub, from 'Abd Allah ibn Sinan, who said: I mentioned to Abu 'Abd Allah (A) a man who was ,troubled by waswas in his wudu, and salat

adding that he is a man of intelligence. Thereupon Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said, "What kind of intelligence has he when he obeys Satan?" I said, "How does he obey Satan?" The Imam replied, "Ask him regarding its cause and he will tell you that it is a work of Satan."(١)

Exposition

You should know that waswasah (or waswas, pl. wasawis; means satanic insinuations, obsessions and suggestions), doubt, lapse of faith, shirk and the like pertain to satanic insinuation and devilish promptings, which Satan puts into the hearts of people. So also, certainty, conviction, tranquility, steadiness, and sincerity of the heart and the like are caused by divine inspiration (ifadat al-rahmaniyyah) and angelic suggestions (ilqa'at al-malakiyyah). To explain this with brevity, the human heart is a subtle reality that is interjacent to the realms of mulk and malakut, the realms of the world (dunya) and the Hereafter.

One of its aspects faces the realm of mulk and the (mundane) world, and it is with this aspect that it pursues the corporeal aspect of life. The other aspect faces the realm of Hereafter, malakut and ghayb, and with that it pursues its spiritual (malakuti) life.

Hence, the heart is like a two-faced mirror. One of its sides is turned toward the world of ghayb, and in it the ghaybi forms are reflected. The other side faces the world of shahadah, and in it the mulki and worldly (mundane) forms are reflected. The mundane forms find their reflection in the outward senses and some of

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1- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i, "kitab al-'aql wa al-jahl," hadith no. ١٠.

the inner cognitive faculties such as khayal and wahm (imagination). The hereafterly .forms find their reflection in the inward intellect and the inner core (sirr) of the heart

Should the worldly aspect of the heart preponderate and its attention be wholly absorbed by the pursuit of the mundane, becoming its sole concern, the hidden side of khayal becomes attuned to the realm of lower malakut (malakut al-sufla) which is the dark reflected image of the world of mulk and corporeal nature (in the realm of malakut)-the realm of the jinn, devils and evil spirits. The suggestions induced in it due to this attunement (with the realm of lower malakut) are satanic insinuations, which .are the source of baseless thoughts and unwholesome imaginings

The soul develops an eagerness for these unfounded fancies due to its absorption with the mundane, and its will and faculty of decision-making, also, become subject to them. As a result, all one's spiritual and bodily conduct becomes satanic in character, as is the case with waswas, doubt, uncertainty, unfounded thoughts, and hallucinations. As the will in its bodily activity becomes attuned to them, bodily actions too assume the character of the inward forms; for one's acts are the image of one's will, which in turn is the image of one's thoughts, which are a reflection of the heart's .orientation

Hence, when the heart be oriented toward the satanic realm, the suggestions it receives are of a satanic character, involving compound ignorance. As a result, waswas, doubt, shirk

and ambiguities emerge from the inner core of one's being and pervade to the .domain of the body

In accordance with the same analogy, if the heart be oriented toward the pursuit of the Hereafter and the higher truths, its attention is directed towards the world of ghayb and it acquires an attunement with the higher malakut, the realm of the angels .and blessed and pure spirits, which is a luminous image of the world of nature

The knowledge imparted to it, then, is of a divine and angelic character, as constituted by true doctrine, and its thoughts are induced by divine inspiration, being free from .the contamination of doubt and shirk

As a result, a state of stability and bliss is created within the soul. Its desires and inclinations fall into conformity with that knowledge, and its will into conformity with those inclinations, and, as a result, its inward and outward, spiritual and bodily conduct takes shape in accordance with the criteria of reason and wisdom. There are certain stages and stations associated with these satanic, angelic, and divine suggestions whose description is not suitable here. Some of the noble traditions, like the following one reported in Majma' al-bayan from al-'Ayyashi, bear out the validity :of what has been said

رَوَى العَيَّاشِـيُّ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبَانَ بْنِ تَغْلُبَ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ إلا وَلِقَلْبِهِ فِى صَدْرِهِ أُذُنَانِ: أُذُنٌ يَنْفُثُ فِيهَا المَلَكُ وَأُذُنٌ يَنْفُثُ فِيهَا الوِسْوَاسُ الخَنَّاسُ، فَيُؤَيِّدُ اللهُ المُؤْمِنَ

بِالمَلِكِ. وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ سُبْحانَهُ: (وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ.)

Al-Ayyashi reports with his chain of transmission from Aban ibn Taghlib from Ja'far ibn Muhammad (S) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "There is no believer whose heart does not have two ears: an angel whispers into one of them and into the other the Slinking Whisperer (al-waswas al-khannas). God confirms the believer with the means of the angel and that is what is meant by this statement of His, subhanahu: (And He confirms them with a spirit from Him (۵۸:۲۲)."(۱)

:This is another tradition from Majma' al-bahrayn

أَنَّهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ وَاضِعٌ خَطْمَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ، لَهُ خُرْطُومٌ مِثْلَ خُرْطُومِ الخِنْزِيرِ، يُوَسْوِسُ لابْنِ آدَمَ أَنْ أَقْبِلْ عَلَى الدُّنْيا وَمَا لا يُحِلُّ اللهُ. فَإِذَا ذَكَرَ اللهَ سُبْحَانَهُ خَنَسَ.

He (i.e. the Prophet) said, "Satan lays his snout, which is like the snout of a pig, on the heart of the son of Adam, and instigates him to turn towards the world (dunya) and that which God has not made lawful. But when he remembers God, Satan slinks (away."(۲)

.There are other traditions of this kind

A Simpler Explanation Of The Character Of Waswas

Having known through the teachings of the urafa' that waswas is the work of Satan, as mentioned in the noble tradition being expounded here and other traditions of the kind, we are compelled to explain this matter in a way that is closer to the minds of .ordinary people and more appropriate for them

Although the above description is in accordance with the

.Al-Tabrisi, Majma' al-bayan, x, ۵۷۱ -۱

.Majma' al-bahrayn, under "kh.n.s.," p. ۳۰۵ -۲

rational and philosophical criteria as well as in conformity with the mystical experience of the urafa', 'the people of the heart', as it is based on certain principles whose discussion lies outside the scope of these pages, we shall abstain from pursuing it any further. That wasawis and acts resulting from them are a handiwork of Satan, insinuated by that accursed creature, and that there is therein no religious or pious motive involved-although the person afflicted may mistakenly believe that he possesses it-is borne out by their being contrary to the laws of the Shari'ah and the traditions of the pure and infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt.

For instance, it has been mentioned in mutawatir traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) that the wudu' of the Messenger of God (S) consisted of single washings (of the face and the forearms). It is an established fact in fiqh that it is sufficient to wash the face, the right, and the left hand each with—a single ghurfah (handful) of water. There is however disagreement among the legists concerning the permissibility of using a second ghurfah.

It may even be inferred from the statements of the author of al-Wasa'il that he believed in its impermissibility or at least doubted its permissibility. Although some have held a contrary opinion, the permissibility of two washings is not open to doubt. There is a heavy preponderance of legal opinion in its favor and many traditions indicate its istihbab.

However, it is not improbable that a single

washing that thoroughly wets the parts washed is preferable. But there is no doubt that three washings-that is, washing the parts each time in such a way that the parts are thoroughly moistened with water-is haram and a bid'ah that invalidates the wudu' when the moisture remaining from it is used for mash. It is mentioned in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (A)that a third washing in wudu' is bid'ah and that every bid'ah is in .Fire

In this case, the ignorant man afflicted with waswas washes the parts ten times during wudu', every time drawing water over the whole part washed most meticulously, or rather he first wets the whole part so well that water spreads thoroughly and a valid washing is achieved, and then repeats this action again and ?again. On what criterion is his action based

To which tradition and to what fatwa of a jurist does it conform? Such a wretch may offer invalid salat with such a wudu' for twenty years and consider himself to have appeared to be most pious and pure in the eyes of the people. While Satan goes on playing with him, and his carnal self goes on deceiving him, he finds fault with others .and considers himself to be in the right

Should something that is opposed to mutawatir explicit dicta (nass) and consensus of the ulama be considered as perfect personal purity and piety or a work of Satan? If it is something that is inspired by utmost God-fearing and

caution in religion, why is it that most of those obsessed by waswas and given to ignorant sanctimony do not exercise caution in matters where caution is necessary or preferable? Have you seen any waswasi who has waswas in dubious matters of a financial character? Has anyone ever come across someone affected with waswas who pays khums five times instead of once, or goes to Hajj several times instead of once? Or one who refrains from food of a doubtful character? Why is it that the rule of asalat al-hilliyyah(١) applies in such cases whereas the rule of asalat al-taharah(٢) ?does not hold good even in a matter related to taharah itself

That, although in regard to things that are lawful there is greater reason to exercise abstinence in a doubtful matter as indicated by some noble traditions, like the hadith .al- tathlih(٣) whereas the case is quite the opposite in matters of taharah

One of the Infallible Imams (A) used to sprinkle water with his blessed hand on his blessed thighs at the time of answering the call of nature so that any trace of splashing that might occur would not be visible. Yet this poor fellow, who considers himself a follower of this Infallible Imam and follows him in the precepts of his religion, does not abstain from anything in matters involving wealth and its .consumption

He eats his food (without any qualms about its lawfulness) by relying on the principle of asalat al-taharah and having eaten cleanses his

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١- Asalat al-hilliyyah means the rule that every thing is permissible unless there is .evidence of its being forbidden

٢- Asalat al-taharah means the rule that when a doubt occurs concerning the ritual purity of something, which was known for certain to be pure before the occurrence of .the doubt, the doubt is of no consequence and is to be ignored

٣- Hadith al-tathlith refers to the following hadith recorded in Wasa'il al Shi'ah, xviii, ١١۴: Al-Kulayni (in al-Kafi, i, ۶٧, hadith no. ١٠) narrates from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Muhammad ibn al-Husayn, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Safwan ibn Yahya,

from Dawud ibn al-Husayn, from 'Umar ibn Hanzalah that al-'Imam al-Sadiq (A) said (in a long hadith): "Matters fall into three categories: those whose rightness (or lawfulness) is evident and hence they are followed; those whose wrongness (or unlawfulness) is evident and hence are to be avoided; and those which are doubtful, regarding whose knowledge reference should be made to God and His Messenger. The Messenger of Allah (S) said: There is that which is evidently lawful (halal bayyin) and that which is evidently unlawful (haram bayyin), and between these there are things which are doubtful and suspect (shubuhat). One who abstains from doubtful things is saved from falling into unlawful things, and one who takes recourse in doubtful things falls in unlawful things and perishes without knowing it." At the end of the hadith the Imam remarks: "Abstaining from doubtful things is better than plunging into that which ruinous." The same tradition has been narrated by al-Saduq in Man la yahduruh al-faqih iii, ٥, hadith no. ٢ with his isnad from Dawud ibn al-Husayn, and by al-Shaykh al-Tusi in al-Tohdhib, vi, ٣٠١, hadith no. ٥٢. It is called "hadith al-tathlith" .(because of the mention therein of the "three matters" (umur thalathah

mouth and hands. While eating, his justification is asalat al-taharah, but after eating, he declares that everything is ritually unclean (najis). Should he, in his fancy; count himself among the learned, he would say that I want to offer salat with real taharah, whereas the advantage of salat with real taharah is something that remains unknown and the fuqaha' (R)do not know of it. Such a person should be asked, if you are so keen about real taharah, then why aren't you as keen about real hilliyyah ?((lawfulness

Even if, supposedly, he were keen to achieve real taharah, what purpose is served by his washing ten times with kurr or jari water? (Although to obtain taharah it is sufficient to wash once with jari water and once with kurr water when the contamination is due to urine and certain other impurities. Even when it is due to urine, it is sufficient, in accordance with the mashhur opinion, to wash once with kurr water, and washing twice is considered sufficient by consensus.) These several washings are inspired by none other than the deceptive Satan and the tricky self, .which make an inconsequential matter appear as an asset to the sanctimonious

Worse and more shameful than this is the waswasah of some in regard to niyyah and takbirat al-'ihram, for therein they commit several muharramat while they consider themselves to be among the pious and this act as bringing them some kind of merit. Niyyah (intention) in something without which man cannot perform

any of his voluntary acts and it is something, which necessarily accompanies all volt .vary actions

Man cannot carry out any of his ritual or non-ritual acts without it. Notwithstanding it, in proportion to their devilishness and the degree of Satan's domination over them, they waste an entire hour and sometimes several hours in order to obtain what is an inescapable necessity, which in the end remains unachieved! Should this matter be regarded as a result of Satanic insinuation and the work of the accursed Iblis who has put his reins on this wretch and concealed an obvious necessity from him, involving him in many muharramat such as breaking the salat, neglecting it, and allowing its time to elapse, or as something that is inspired by inner purity, sanctity and God-?fearing

Another kind of waswas has to do with the refusal to join the congregation prayer led by someone who is 'adil in accordance with nass and fatwa due to the righteousness of his outward conduct and his dutifulness in regard to the Shari'ah, whereas only God knows his inner character, regarding which it is neither necessary nor permissible to .investigate

Notwithstanding it, since the person afflicted with waswas has his reins controlled by Satan, he draws himself away from the jama'at of Muslims and prays individually in a corner of the mosque. He offers such justifications as, 'I have qualms' and 'It does not ,satisfy me' and so on, while he himself has no qualms about leading others in prayer

despite the fact that the job of imamate is more difficult and is more open to qualms. However, he does not have any doubts or qualms here because that is in agreement .with his self-seeking motives

Of the forms of waswas that is more prevalent is the one that relates to qira'ah in prayer, wherein due to repetitive and excessive effort in gutturalization the sounds of letters often violates the rules of correct recitation or the shape of the word is totally changed. For instance, the word, dallin is pronounced by some in such a way that the dad sounds like qaf. The guttural ha' of rahman, rahim and other words is turned around in the throat in such a manner that a strange sound is produced and the letters of a word are so separated from one another that the very form, and root of .the word is totally altered and distorted out of its original shape

Ultimately, all the spiritual aspects and divine secrets of salat, which is the spiritual ascension (mi'raj) of the faithful, the agent of nearness (to God) for the pious, and the pillar of the faith, are neglected, with all attention given to the 'niceties' of recitation. And yet despite it all, the pronunciation of words is so corrupted that the recitation fails to meet the literal dicta of the Shari'ah. In view of this, should this (perverse obsession with qira'ah) be considered as satanic waswas or as a divine inspiration on the part of

?the sanctimonious person afflicted with waswas

Despite all these traditions relating to the presence of attention and attentiveness of the heart during worship, all that this poor fellow has understood concerning the theory and practice of the presence of heart is either to be obsessed with waswas concerning niyyah or and to twist to extend inordinately the long vowel (madd) of ولا الضَّالِّينَ his mouth, eyes and other facial features while vocalizing words.

Is it not a misfortune that one should remain for years negligent concerning the presence of heart and the remedy of his disturbed mind, without ever thinking of taking a step in this regard, without regarding it as one of the significant aspects of worship and without learning the way of acquiring it from those learned in the matters ?of the heart

Is it not a calamity that by the side of this neglect he should be obsessed with this kind of absurdities, and consider as being essential to piety and inner purity what are a 'work of the accursed Slinkier' according to the express texts of the Noble Scripture and a 'handiwork of Satan' according to the express traditions of the Truthful Ones (A) and acting upon which makes one's works invalid according to the verdicts of the ?'fuqaha

At times waswasah is originated or heightened in one because other ignorant persons like himself consider it as one of his virtues. For instance, they extol his piety, religiosity and sacred character by remarking that 'This person is

so religious and pious that he is given to waswas', although waswas has not only no relation to religiosity but is contrary to it and is due to ignorance and absence of understanding. But since they do not tell him the truth and do not regard him with repulsion and disapprobation, but on the contrary praise and extol him, he pursues this vicious conduct to its extreme, making himself a plaything in the hands of Satan and his task force and banishing himself from the sacred company of those near to .God

And therefore, my dear, now that it is known through reason and tradition that these are satanic wasawis and that these obsessions are a handiwork of Iblis that invalidate our works and turn our hearts away from God, the Exalted, beware of them, for this waswas may not remain confined to your acts and may affect your belief and creed and thus expel you from the religion of God. By making you uncertain in your faith in God and Resurrection, it may lead you into everlasting wretchedness. Since Satan cannot mislead the like of you into immoral and profane conduct, he approaches you .by the way of worship and rites

First, he makes your works and deeds, which should be a means of attaining divine nearness and of ascending into the proximity of God, the Exalted, to go waste and become invalid, and turns them into a means of remoteness from the proximity of the ,Sacred Lord, the All-Glorious

and of nearness to Iblis and his troops. Ultimately, it is feared, he may make a plaything of your beliefs. Hence, take steps for its remedy by all means and through .any kind of exercise that may be necessary

The Remedy For Waswas

You should know that this malady of the heart, which like other diseases of the heart can lead man to everlasting perdition and endless wretchedness, can be cured very easily and simply by the means of beneficial knowledge and action. But first, one must know himself to be sick, for only then can he take a step to cure his illness. But the difficulty is that Satan has so driven home his arguments that he does not consider himself to be sick. Rather, he considers others to be wayward and negligent of their .religion

As to the theory of remedy, it lies in contemplating about these matters as mentioned. It is good for a human being that his acts and deeds be based on reflection and thought. He should think about an action that he wishes to perform for the pleasure of God, the Exalted, as to from where and from whom he has derived its details. It is known that the common people learn them from the fuqaha' and their maraji taqlid (authorities on Law), who derive the manner of performing an act from the Book and .the Sunnah by the means of ijtihad

Now when we refer to the works of the fuqaha, we find that they repudiate the conduct of

one obsessed with waswas and consider some of his acts as invalid. When we refer to the noble traditions and the Book of God, we see that his conduct is ascribed to Satan and the perpetrator is considered to be devoid of intelligence. Hence, when the case is such, an intelligent person should reflect and think for a while if Satan has not taken control of his mind. Then he must commit himself to setting aside this kind of conduct .and correct it, for therein lies God's good pleasure

Whenever someone finds a trace of this obsession in himself, he should turn to other ordinary people or question the ulama and fuqaha' about his own conduct to see whether he is suffering from waswas or not. That is because most of the time the one suffering from waswas is unaware of his own condition and considers himself as quite .balanced and others as negligent

But if he should do some reflection he would find that this belief too is a satanic suggestion, for when he sees that the practice of the ulama' and the great scholars in whose knowledge and practice he has faith, or rather that of the legal authorities (maraji' taqlid) from whom all Muslims derive the issues of halal and haram, is contrary to his own practice, he cannot say that the entire class of ulama, the leaders of the faith and its adherents are not committed to the religion of God and it is only the waswasi

.person who is committed to piety

After that, he has come to know in theory that he is ill, it is necessary to take remedial action. The main point that relates to action is that he should not pay attention to the satanic waswasah and the whims that it insinuates. For instance, if he is suffering from waswas in the matter of wudu', he should make use of a single handful of water despite Satan's protestation. His Satan may say that this act is not valid. To this he should reply by saying that 'If my act is not valid, then the practice of the Messenger of God (S) and the Pure Imams (A), as well as that of all the fuqaha' was invalid too. The Messenger of God (S) and the Imams (A) performed wudu' for nearly three hundred years and the manner in which they performed it was like this according to ".mutawatir traditions. So if their wudu' was invalid, let mine also be such

If you are muqallid of a mujtahid, you may tell Satan: "I am acting in accordance with the ruling of a mujtahid. If my wudu' is invalid, God shall not consider me responsible, and He has no incriminating grounds (hujjah) against me." Should the accursed one cast doubt concerning the ruling of the mujtahid, saying that he did not give such a ruling, fetch his book, which is accessible, open it and show it to him. If you ignore his insinuations several times and

act contrary to his suggestions, he would take his hands off you in desperation, and it is hoped that you will obtain a definite cure of your illness, as mentioned in some noble :traditions

وَفِی الْکافِی بِإسْنادِهِ عَنْ زُرارَهَ وَأَبی بَصیرٍ قالا: قُلْنا لَهُ (البَاقِرُ أَوِ الصَّادِقُ عَلَیْهِما السَّلامُ): الرَّجُلُ یَشُکُّ کَثیراً فِی صَلاتِهِ حَتّی لا یَدْری کَمْ صَلّی وَلا ما بَقِیَ عَلَیْهِ؟ قالَ: یُعیدُ. قُلْنا لَهُ: فَإنَّهُ یُکْثِرُ عَلَیْهِ ذلِکَ کُلَّما عادَ شَکَّ؟ قالَ: یَمْضی فِی شَکِّهِ. ثُمَّ قالَ: لا تُعَوِّدُوا الخَبیثَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِکُمْ بِنَقْضِ الصَّلاهِ فَتُطْمِعُوهُ، فَإنَّ الشَّیْطانَ خَبیثٌ یَعْتادُ لِما عُوِّدَ. فَلْیَمْضِ أَحَدُکُمْ فِی الوَهْمِ وَلا یُکْثِرَنَّ نَقْضَ الصَّلاهِ، فَإنَّهُ إذا فَعَلَ ذلِکَ مَرّاتٍ لَمْ یَعُدْ إلَیْهِ الشَّکُّ. قالَ زُرارَهُ: ثُمَّ قالَ: إنَّما یُریدُ الخَبیثُ أَنْ یُطاعَ فَإذا عُصِیَ لَمْ یَعُدْ إلی أَحَدِکُمْ.

In al-Kafi, (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Zurarah and Abu Basir that they said: We asked him (i.e. Imam al-Baqir or Imam al-Sadiq [A]) about a man who had frequent doubts in his salat, to the extent that he wouldn’t know how much he has offered and how much remain to be offered. He said, “He should repeat (the salat).” We said to him, “That happens to him a lot and wherever he repeats his doubt also recurs.” The Imam said, “(In that case) he should ignore his doubt.” Then, he added, “Don’t let the Evil One get accustomed to haunting you by tempting him by breaking the salat. For Satan is wicked and gets accustomed to that which he is allowed to get used

to. So when one of you does not pay attention to his doubt and does not break his salat frequently, and this is done a number of times, the doubt will not recur to him." Zurarah says: Then the Imam added, "The Evil One wants to be obeyed, and when he is disobeyed he will not return to any of you."(1)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِذَا كَثُرَ عَلَيْكَ السَّهْوُ فَامْضِ فِي صَلاتِكَ، فَإِنَّهُ يُوشَكُ أَنْ يَدَعَكَ. إِنَّمَا هُوَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ.

Al-Kulayni) reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "When sahw (i.e.) forgetfulness, absent-mindedness, lapse of attention) occurs often to you during salat, disregard it, for that will make Satan leave you. Indeed sahw is due to Satan."(2)

Certainly, when you oppose his insinuations and do not pay attention to them, Satan will give up his hopes and the state of steadiness and certitude will return to your soul. But while you oppose him you must tearfully beseech God, the Exalted, and seek the refuge of His Sacred Essence from the evil of the Accursed One and from the evil of the carnal self. Of course, He shall help you. In the following tradition of al-Kafi too, we have been commanded to seek God's help against the evil of Satan:

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: أَتَى رَجُلٌ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، أَشْكُو إِلَيْكَ مَا أَلْقَى مِنَ الوَسْوَسَهِ فِي صَلاتِي حَتَّى لا أَدْرِي مَا صَلَّيْتُ مِنْ زِيَادَهٍ أَوْ نُقْصَانٍ. فَقَالَ: إِذَا دَخَلْتَ

p: ۶۷۹

1- Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi, iii, ۳۵۸.

2- Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi, iii, ۳۵۹.

فِی صَلاتِکَ فَاطْعَنْ فَخِذَکَ الأیْسَرَ بِإصْبَعِکَ الیُمْنَی المُسَبِّحهِ ثُمَّ قُلْ: [بِسْمِ اللهِ وَبِاللهِ تَوَکَّلْتُ عَلَی اللهِ، أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ السَّمِیعِ العَلِیمِ مِنَ الشَّیْطَانِ الرَّجِیمِ.] فَإنَّکَ تَنْحَرُهُ وَتَطْرُدُهُ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I complain to you concerning the waswasah that so troubles me during salat that I don’t know how much of my prayer I have offered.” The Prophet said to him, “When you enter your salat, strike your left thigh with the forefinger of your right hand, then say: In the Name of God and by God, I put my trust in God, I seek refuge in God, the All-hearing, the All-knowing from Satan, the Stoned One. You will exorcize him and drive him away.”(١)

And all praise is God’s, firstly and lastly, outwardly and inwardly, and may benedictions and peace be upon Muhammad and the Pure Ones of his progeny.

Twenty Sixth Hadith: The Pursuit Of Knowledge

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَی ثِقَهِ الإسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ الکُلَیْنِی عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الحَسَنِ وَعَلِیِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ زِیَادٍ وَمُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَحْیَی عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ جَمِیعاً عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الأَشْعَرِیِّ عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ مَیْمُونٍ القَدَّاحِ وَعَلِیِّ بْنِ إبْرَاهِیمَ عَنْ أَبِیهِ عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عِیسَی عَنِ القَدَّاحِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللّهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللّهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ سَلَکَ طَرِیقاً یَطْلُبُ فِیهِ عِلْماً سَلَکَ بِهِ طَرِیقاً إلَی الجَنَّهِ. وَإنَّ المَلائِکَهَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا لِطَالِبِ العِلْمِ رَضاً بِهِ. وَإنَّهُ یَسْتَغْفِرُ لِطَالِبِ العِلْمِ مَنْ فِی السَّماءِ وَمَنْ فِی الأَرْضِ حَتّی الحُوتِ فِی البَحْرِ. وَفَضْلُ

١- Al-Kulayni, Furu’ al-Kafi, iii, ۳۵۸.

العَالِمِ عَلَى العَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ القَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ النُّجُومِ لَيْلَةَ البَدْرِ. وَإِنَّ العُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الأَنْبِيَاءِ. إِنَّ الأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُوَرِّثُوا دِينَاراً وَلا دِرْهَماً، وَلَكِنْ وَرِثُوا العِلْمَ. فَمَنْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ أَخَذَ بِحَظٍّ وَافِرٍ.

With my chain of transmitters reaching up to the thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and 'Ali ibn Muhammad, from Sahl ibn Ziyad and Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-'Ash'ari, from 'Abd Allah ibn Maymun al-Qaddah; and from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from Hammad ibn 'Isa, from al-Qaddah, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "One who proceeds on a path in the pursuit of knowledge, God makes him proceed therewith on a path to the Garden (Paradise). And, verily, the angels spread their wings for the seekers of knowledge out of delight. Verily, every creature of the heaven and the earth asks forgiveness for the seeker of knowledge, even the fish in the sea. The merit of the 'alim (the learned) over the 'abid (the devout) is like the merit of the moon over the stars on a full-moon night. The learned are the heirs of the prophets, for the prophets did not leave behind a legacy of wealth but that of knowledge. So whoever partakes of it derives a plenteous (benefit."(١)

Exposition

Know that the words of the noble tradition do not need an explanation. However, in the course of a few sections we shall expound the qualities ascribed by the Noble

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١ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i, kitab fadl al-'ilm, bab thawab al-'alim wa al-muta'allim, hadith ١.

Messenger (S) to the learned and the seekers of knowledge. And in Allah is my trust .and reliance

The Path Of Knowledge And The Way To Paradise

At the outset, it should be known that the sciences are absolutely divisible into two kinds. One of these is the worldly sciences, whose ultimate purpose is to achieve worldly aims. The other is the sciences of the Hereafter, whose ultimate purpose is attainment of malakuti stations and degrees and reaching the otherworldly stations. Earlier it was pointed out that the distinction between these two kinds of sciences depends for the most part on the distinction between intentions and purposes (behind their pursuit), although they in themselves are divisible into the two kinds. From the viewpoint of appropriateness, the effects described in the noble tradition in relation to the pursuit of knowledge and the learned evidently correspond to the second type of .knowledge, the knowledge of the Hereafter

It was also mentioned earlier that all the sciences of the Hereafter are included in three categories. They either pertain to the knowledge of God and doctrines (ma'arif), or to spiritual instruction and wayfaring towards God, or to the laws and precepts of servitude. Now we say that the development (ta'mir) of life in the Hereafter depends on these three aspects, and hence there are three kinds of paradise: the Garden of Essence, which is the ultimate goal of the knowledge of Allah and the divine doctrinal truths; the Garden of attributes, which is the goal of self-purification and the disciplining of the soul; and

thirdly, the Garden of acts, which is the (other-worldly) form of the observance of the duties of servitude as well as its result. Moreover, these gardens are not in a .(developed state (at the beginning

Hence, the ground of the Garden of acts is a plain land, like the ground of the soul at the beginning. Their development is subject to the cultivation and flourishing of the soul. Therefore, should the soul in its Hidden aspect be not developed by the means of the divine teachings and the Hidden attractions of the Essence (jadhadt al-ghaybiyyeh-ye dhatiyyeh), man shall not attain to the Garden of the Essence and the Paradise of Tryst (jannat al-liqa'). Should the inner self be unrefined and the soul be unadorned, should the will and determination be not strengthened and the heart not receive the radiance of the Names and the Attributes, man will not attain to the Garden of the Names and the Attributes, which is the middle paradise. Should one fail to observe the duties of servitude, and his acts, works, movements and pauses be not in accordance with the precepts of the divine Law, one will not attain to the Garden of :Acts, concerning which this has been said

(وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ.)

.Therein being whatever the souls desire, and the eyes delight in

)

۴۳:۷۱

(

On the basis of these preliminaries, which are in accordance with philosophical proofs, the experience of the gnostics, and the traditions of the prophets and the awliya (A) in addition to

being inferable from the Noble divine Scripture, the sciences-whatever their level, whether they pertain to the ma'arif or something else are a path for reaching the Garden appropriate to each of them, and the wayfarer of each of the paths of .knowledge is a traveler on one of the paths of Paradise

We have said earlier that knowledge is absolutely the way to action, even the knowledge of the ma'arif; which, however, involves the actions of the heart and inward gravitations, the result and inward forms of which are the Garden of the Essence and the Paradise of Tryst. Hence, the pursuit of the path of knowledge is the pursuit of the way leading to the path of Paradise, and the way to a path is also part of .the path

An Important Point

That journey on the path of knowledge has been ascribed to the creature and the movement towards the Garden to the Sacred Divine Essence (in the phrase سَلَکَ بِهِ طَرِيقاً إلَى الجَنَّهِ) is for the reason that on the level of multiplicity the acquisitive aspect of the creature has been given predominance, whereas on the level of return to unity the Divine aspect has been made to prevail. From another viewpoint, it may be said that :the wayfaring towards the Garden is also ascribable to the creature

(وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا.)

(And they find all that they did confronting them. (۱۸:۴۹

(فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّهٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّهٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and

(whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it. (۹۹:۷-۸

The authority amongst the philosophers and the pride of the righteous sect, Sadr al-Muta'allihin (R) has made statements in this regard indicating that the perception of favorable and repulsive things is by itself heaven and hell, and the 'knowledge' pertains to things favorable to the soul and 'ignorance' to those which are .incompatible with it

This contradicts his own view as expressed in his philosophical works, where he has refuted the belief of Shaykh Ghazali, as is narrated from him, that holds paradise and hell to be the pleasures and pains felt by the soul and denies their objective existence. This belief, besides being contrary to the proofs of the philosophers, is against the traditions of the prophets and the celestial scriptures, as well as the teachings of all .the religions, and that great philosopher has himself refuted it and shown its invalidity

But that honored personage has himself made similar statements in this relation, although he basically rejects Ghazali's belief. In any case, these statements do not appear to be appropriate in my humble opinion, though any further elaboration of this .matter is not appropriate for these pages

The Angels' Spreading Their Wings For The Seekers Of Knowledge

Know chat the angels are of various kinds and species, and no one has the knowledge of them, who are God's hosts, except the sacred Essence of Him Who knows best the :Hidden

(وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ.)

(And none knows the hosts of thy Lord but He. (۷۴:۳۱

One of their kinds consists of

those angels who are totally absorbed in the love of God (muhayyamin al-majdhubin), who have no awareness of the world of being; they know not whether God has created the world or not, and are immersed in Divine Beauty and Glory and are absorbed in the Majesty of His sacred Essence. It is said that the blessed letter Nun' in :the noble verse

(ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ.)

(Nun. By the Pen, and what they inscribe, (۶۸:۱

.is a reference to them

Another group of them is the archangels and the inhabitants of the higher jabarut, their being many species of them, each of which has its own specific work and administrative role in the worlds. Another group is the angels of the spheres of the higher malakut and the Upper Gardens (jannat al-'aliyah) and of them there are .varied and different kinds

Another group consists of the angels of the spheres of barzakh (the interworld) and mithal (the world of analogies). Another group consists of the angels charged with the affairs of the spheres of nature and mulk, each of whom is encharged with a particular affair and managing function. This group of angels that administers the world of mulk is different from the angels existing in the worlds of barzakh and mithal, .as has been established in its proper place and as can also be inferred from traditions

One should know that wings, feathers, and other like members are not common to all the kinds of angels. Rather, from the angels absorbed in Divine

love to the inhabitants of the higher malakut-all of them are free and devoid of such members and extended parts. They are free from all forms of matter, its properties, essentials, and all that is necessarily associated with it. As to the angels of the worlds of mithal and the malakuti beings of barzakh, it is possible for them to possess parts, members, wings, feathers and the like. Since they pertain to the spheres of barzakhi quantities and the mithali analogies, each of them is characterized by a particular :quantity, members, and organs specific to itself. The verses

(وَالصَّافَّاتِ صَفًّا.)

(By the rangers ranging. (۳۷:۱

(الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَهِ رُسُلًا أُولِی أَجْنِحَهٍ مَثْنَی وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ.)

Praise belongs to God, Originator of the heavens and earth, who appointed the angels (to be messengers having wings two, three and four. (۳۵:۱

refer to this kind of angels. But as to the archangels (mala'keh-ye muqarrabin) and the inhabitants of the higher jabarut, they can embody themselves in any world in accordance with its form and appearance, due to their encompassing ontic and .(sustentative character (ihateh-ye wujudiyyeh-ye qaymumiyyeh

Hence Gabriel, the Trustworthy, who is one of the Near Ones to God and the bearer of the divine revelation and amongst the highest of the beings inhabiting the jabarut, incarnated himself continuously for the sacred essence of the Noble Messenger (S) in the world of limited mithal, twice in the world of absolute mithal and occasionally in the world of mulk. Sometimes he would even appear in

the form of Dihyah al-Kalbi, who was the foster brother of the Noble Messenger (S) .and was the most handsome of men

One must know that the assumption of mulki form by the angels is not something at the level of the mulki beings, which can be seen by anyone with a sound visual sense. Rather, even then, their malakuti aspect prevails over their mulki aspect, and that is why people could not see them with their corporeal eyes even after their assumption of mulki form. Rather, only some of the Companions could see Gabriel when he appeared in the form of Dihyah al-Kalbi, and then only with God's approval and the .(leave of the Seal of the Prophets (S

Hence all the angels of God are benignly disposed towards those of the spiritual progeny of Adam—the elect of God (A) to whom the angels prostrated and whose command was obeyed throughout the realms of being-who seek knowledge and gnosis and, having turned toward God and the truth, tread the path of God's good pleasure, and they (i.e. the angels) are charged with helping and training them. And when this mulki being becomes malakuti, and when this terrestrial creature becomes a celestial one, he walks on the wings of the angels; and should the eyes of his malakuti and mithali vision open, he would see himself standing on the wings of angels and walking on his path with their assistance. This was concerning those who travel from mink co malakut, though they

.are still on the way

As to those who are mulki and have not entered the malakut, it is possible that the inhabitants of the malakut may come to their help and, out of humility for them, spread their wings under their feet out of their delight on account of their conduct, as :is indicated by this noble hadith from Ghawali al-la'ali

عَنِ المِقْدَادِ رَضِىَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَقُولُ: إن المَلائِكَهَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا لِطَالِبِ العِلْمِ حَتَّى يَطَأَ عَلَيْهَا رَضاً بِهِ.

It is narrated from Miqdad (R) that he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say, "Verily, the angels spread out their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of their (delight for him, so that he walks over them."(١

From this, we come to know that one who takes the first step towards God and His good pleasure, stands over the shoulders of the angels and sits on their wings and this celestial carpet remains until the ultimate stages of acquisition of knowledge and learning. The levels, however, differ, and the angels who are the helpers of this wayfarer change, until he reaches a stage where he puts his feet on the middle of the heads of archangels, and then traverses certain worlds and ascends through certain levels where the way is closed to the archangels and where Gabriel, the one :entrusted with delivering Divine revelations, confesses his inability and declares

لَوْ دَنَوْتُ أَنْمُلَةً لَاحْتَرَقْتُ.

Should I approach to the extent of an inch I will

.Ibn Abi Jumhur, Ghawali al-la'ali, i, ۱۰۶ -۱

(be burnt down.(1)

The above description not only does not conflict with philosophical proofs but is in conformity with them and does not stand in need of any interpretation (ta'wil), as has been offered by the sublime philosopher, Sadr al-Muta'allihin, although he himself affirms (the existence of) the angels of the world of mithal and their incarnation in mulk and malakut in his philosophical books and scientific works, with expositions that are unparalleled and exclusive to that honored personage.

The Inhabitants Of The Heaven And Earth Asking Forgiveness For The Seeker Of Knowledge

Know that it is established in its proper place that the reality of being is in to the Excellences, Names, and Attributes of God. Pure existence is pure excellence, and hence God, the Glorious, being pure existence, is the totality of all excellence and all the Names and Attributes of Beauty (Jamal) and Glory (jalal). And it is mentioned in hadith that:

عِلْمٌ كُلُّهُ قُدْرَةٌ كُلُّهُ.

Knowledge in its entirety is power in its entirety.

And it has been demonstrated that the mirrored reality of existence is the same as the totality of excellences, from which none of the excellences can possibly be separated. However, the manifestation of those excellences is in accordance with the extent of the vastness or narrowness of a being and the burnish or obscurity of the mirror. In this respect, the entire realm of being comprises the signs of the Essence, and beings are mirrors that reflect the Names and the Attributes.

This matter is in conformity with philosophical proofs, or rather there are few issues of hikmah that equal it

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1- Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-'anwar, xviii, ۳۸۲.

in respect of the strength and firmness of its proof. It is also in accordance with the experience of the mystics and the apprehensions of the gnostics, in addition to being in conformity with the noble verses of the Sacred Book and the traditions of the pure and infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A). Hence, in several places in the divine Scripture all the existents are mentioned as being engaged in the glorification of God:

(يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ.)

(All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies God.(١)

(تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ.)

The seven heavens and the earth, and whosoever in them extol Him; nothing is, that does not proclaim His praise, but you do not understand their extolling.(٢)

It is quite clear that extolling the perfection (tasbih) and sanctity (taqdis) of God, the Exalted, and praising Him requires the knowledge and gnosis of His sacred station and His Attributes of Beauty and Glory, and these cannot occur where then is no trace of knowledge and gnosis. This sublime fact has been so explicitly mentioned in the noble traditions that there is no room for any interpretation (ta'wil wa tawjih).

However, those who dwell in nescience, from among traditional philosophers and dialecticians, from whom the divine truths are veiled, have tried to offer stale interpretations of the words of God which in addition to being contrary to their literal meanings (zawahir) as well as unambiguous verses, in

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۱- ۶۲:۱

۲- ۱۷:۴۴

some cases–such as in the story of the ant's speech in the Surat al-Naml–are opposed to many explicit statements narrated from the Infallible Imams (A) besides being against firm metaphysical proofs. However, to engage in the description of that proof .and its preliminaries is not fit for these pages

Hence, the existents' extolling of God is on the basis of their consciousness. It is :mentioned in a hadith that the Noble Messenger (S) said

Before my ministry, there was a time when I used to look after the sheep and camels as a shepherd (and there has been no prophet who has not tended the sheep). As I watched them, I noticed that all of a sudden they would get alarmed and take to flight without there being anything around that might agitate them. I used to wonder about its reason until Gabriel came to me. On my asking him about it, he said, "The unbeliever (after death) is dealt such a blow that everything that God has created, (except mankind and the jinn, get terrified on hearing it."(١)

The urafa say that man is the most isolated of beings from malakut as long as he is preoccupied with mulk and it cares, and since this preoccupation of his is stronger than that of all other beings, his separation and nescience, as well as his deprivation .from attaining to malakut, is greater than that of all others

Furthermore, all beings have a malakuti aspect by means of which they possess life, consciousness, and all

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١- This refers to the following hadith of Furu' al-Kafi, iii, ٢٣٣: عَنِ البَاقِرِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إنِّى كُنْتُ أَنْظُرُ إلَى الإبِلِ وَالغَنَم وَأنَا أَرْعَاهَا - وَلَيْسَ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إلا وَقَدْ رَعَى الغَنَمَ - وَكُنْتُ أَنْظُرُ إلَيْهَا - قَبْلَ النُّبُوَّهِ - وَهِىَ مُتَمَكِّنَهٌ فِى المَكِينَهِ مَا حَوْلَهَا شَىْءٌ حَتَّى تَذْعَرَ فَتَطِيرَ، فَأَقُولُ: مَا هَذَا؟ وَأَعْجَبُ، حَتَّى حَدَّثَنِى جِبْرَئِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّ الكَافِرَ يُضْرَبُ ضَرْبَهً مَا خَلَقَ اللهُ شَيْئاً إلا سَمِعَهَا وَيَذْعُرُ لَهَا إلا الثَّقَلَيْنِ.

:other functions of life. The verse

(وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِى إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنْ الْمُوقِنِينَ.)

Thus We showed Abraham the malakut of the heavens and the earth, so that he (might be o f those having sure faith, (۶: ۷۵

also bears testimony to the fact that consciousness and life pervade all existents. Now that it is known that all existents possess knowledge and consciousness and that all of them have a malakuti aspect, since man does not stand with them on the same plane and is in addition veiled from malakut, there is no wonder if they should ask forgiveness for the human being pursuing the path of knowledge and moving towards God, Who is the Source of existence and the Provider of the realm of being, and implore His sacred Merciful Essence with their clear malakuti voices -which are audible to open malakuti ears-to immerse this total offspring of mulk and this pride of the children of nature in the ocean of His forgiveness and to cover all his .shortcomings

It is also possible that as all other existents know that it is not possible for them to attain to the courtyard of the Sacred Essence and to dive into the ocean of perfection except through the mediation of the sacred essence of the Perfect Man-who has the gnosis of God and knowledge of the divine teachings and unites knowledge and action within himself, as has been established in its proper place-for this reason they ,beseech of God, the Exalted, man's perfection

which is attained through immersion in the ocean of God's forgiveness, so that they, too, through his means, may attain to the excellences appropriate for them. And God .knows best

The 'Alim's Superiority Over The 'Abid

Know that the reality of knowledge and of faith-whose strength is also based on knowledge-is light. This issue, besides being in accordance with philosophical proof and mystic experience, is also in conformity with unambiguous texts and traditions of the pure and infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A). That is because the characteristic of 'light', which consists of its being manifest in itself and its ability to make manifest other than .itself, is also true of knowledge

Rather, its being true of the reality of knowledge is factual, whereas its ascription to sensible lights is more akin to figurative usage. That is because sensible light does not even possess self-manifestation in the real sense; it possesses quiddity and is one of the instances of that concept. However, the reality of knowledge is by essence existence itself; though in conception it is contrary to it, it corresponds and is associated with it in the context of objective reality. The reality of existence is :identical with 'light' and identical with consciousness

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (۲۴:۳۵

Hence, knowledge is same as light and in the noble verses faith (iman) and knowledge .'have been referred to as 'light

(وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ.)

(And to whomsoever God assigns no light, no light has he. (۲۴:۴۰

In the

noble Light Verse, ‘light’ has been interpreted as ‘knowledge’ according to the :(exegesis of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A

عَنِ الفُضَيْلِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لأبِى عَبْدِاللهِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: (اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.) قَالَ: كَذَلِكَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: (مَثَلُ نُورِهَ) قَالَ: مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. قُلْتُ: (كَمِشْكَاةٍ) قَالَ: صَدْرُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: (فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ) قَالَ: فِيهِ نُورُ العِلْمِ - يَعْنِى النُّبُوَّهَ. قُلْتُ: (المِصْبَاحُ فِى زُجَاجَهٍ) قَالَ: عِلْمُ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ صَدَرَ إلَى قَلْبِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ... الحديث.

Al-Fudayl ibn Yasar says: I asked Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (A) concerning the meaning of ‘Allah is the Light o f the Heavens and the earth.’ He replied, “Such is Allah, the All-mighty and Glorious.” I asked him (about the meaning of the phrase) ‘the likeness of His Light.’ He said, “(It means) Muhammad (S).” I asked him, “(What is meant by) ‘as a niche’?” He said, “The breast of Muhammad (S).” I asked him, “(What is meant by) ‘wherein is a lamp’?” He said, “(It means) in it is the light of knowledge that is prophethood.” I asked him, “(What is meant by) The lamp is in a glass?” He said, “(It means) the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (S) emanated towards the heart of (‘Ali’ (A)...”(١)

وَعَنِ البَاقِرِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ... أَنَّهُ يَقُولُ: أنَا هَادِى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ؛ مَثَلُ العِلْمِ الَّذِى أُعْطِيتُهُ وَهُوَ نُورِى الَّذِى يُهْتَدَى بِهِ مَثَلُ المِشْكَاهِ فِيهَا المِصْبَاحُ. فَالمِشْكَاهُ قَلْبُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَالمِصْبَاحُ نُورُهُ الَّذِى فِيهِ العِلْمُ.

It is

.Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-Tawhid, ١٥٧ -١

narrated from Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said, "I am the guide of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of the knowledge that I have been given-which is the light wherewith they are guided-is as a niche, wherein is a lamp. 'The niche' is the heart of Muhammad (S) and 'the lamp' is the knowledge: that is, its light that is in it."(1)

وَفِى رِوَايَةٍ: فَالمُؤْمِنُ يَنْقَلِبُ فِى خَمْسَةٍ مِنَ النُّورِ: مَدْخَلُهُ نُورٌ وَمَخْرَجُهُ نُورٌ وَعِلْمُهُ نُورٌ وَكَلامُهُ نُورٌ وَمَصِيرُهُ إِلَى الجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ نُورٌ.

In a tradition, it is stated, "The man of faith moves in five lights: his entry is light; his exit is light; his knowledge is light; his speech is light; and his passage towards Paradise on the Day of Resurrection is light."(2)

And this is mentioned in a famous hadith:

العِلْمُ نُورٌ يَقْذِفُهُ اللهُ فِى قَلْبِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ.

Knowledge is a light that God casts into the heart of anyone that He wishes.(3)

There are various degrees of this light according to the different levels of the faith and knowledge of persons. It should be known that this real light that is in those who possess faith and knowledge, as it pertains to the lights of the world of the Hereafter, manifests itself in that world in the form of sensible radiance that varies with the soul's activity, and it is this light that shall illuminate the Sirat. Hence, the light of a group is like the light of the sun, that of another like that of the moon, and

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1- Tafsir nur al-thaqalayn, iii, ۶۰۵.

2- Al-Bahrani, Tafsir al-burhan, iii, ۱۳۵.

3- Author's Note: This is part of a long hadith that appears in the gloss on the Munyat al-murid of the blessed Shahid (al-Shahid al-Thani) which has been published together with the Ruwad al-jinan. (See also Bihar al-'anwar, i, ۲۲۵, where it appears with a slight difference in wording.)

.so on until it is just sufficient to illuminate the ground around one's feet

Though, as we have known, knowledge is 'light' and 'manifestation', in their real sense and without any trace of metaphorical expression, we-poor folk-are veiled from the real sun of knowledge by the dark curtain of carnal nature and dwell in the gloomy night of the realm of mulk. We are veiled from the daily intensifying light of wisdom and insight and imagine that these are parables based on allegory and .metaphor and on surmise and reification

Yes, as long as we remain stupefied by the slumber of life and intoxicated by carnal nature, we cannot differentiate reality from allegory, and reality appears to be an allegory to our eyes, for, in fact, in the world of metaphors reality takes the form of .allegory

النَّاسُ نَيامٌ، فإذا مَاتُوا انْتَبَهُوا.

(The people are asleep and they wake up on death.(١)

When our eyes are opened, we shall see that in the same way as the light of the sun and the moon is luminous and illuminating, so is the light of the man of knowledge. In this world he illuminates the gloomy hearts and brings to life the dead of nescience and ignorance by the light of his knowledge, and in that world, too, his light is encompassing; and by the means of that encircling radiance, he intercedes in favor of chose who derive light from the niche of his knowledge and are attached to the .courtyard of his sanctity

It should be known

١- Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, Sharh al-sad kalimeh-ye qisar, ۵۴.

that ‘ibadah, too, cannot take place without knowledge, and hence the ‘abid too has a light that is particularly his. Rather, the essence of faith in God and worship of Him are light, with the difference that the ‘abid’s light is confined to himself; it illuminates the .path beneath his feet, but does not give light to others

Therefore, their likeness is that of stars on a full-moon night wherein their brilliance is dimmed due to the light of the moon. They shine for themselves and their light does not benefit others. Hence the similitude of the ‘abid in comparison with the ‘alim is that of a star, though not that of a star on a moonless night wherein it is a source of illumination to some extent, but of a star on a full-moon night when it just shines .without illuminating other things

Sadr al-Muta’allihin (Q) says, “That which is meant by ‘alim’ in this noble hadith is other than the divine man of knowledge (‘alim al-rabbani) whose knowledge is immediate (ladunni), obtained through Divine gift, like the sciences of the prophets and the awliya’ (A)as is shown by the metaphor of moon; for otherwise the metaphor of sun would have been more appropriate, because its light is by Divine beneficence, without there being any intermediary belonging to the recipient’s species or genus.” .Here ends his statement—may God elevate his station

The Ulama Being The Heirs Of The Prophets

This inheritance is spiritual, for the descent of the ulama from the prophets is of a malakuti nature. In the

same way as the human being is an offspring of mulk by virtue of his mulki life, he undergoes a malakuti birth under the rearing care of the prophets and after obtaining the station of the heart. As the source of the former birth is the physical father, the .(source of the latter birth is the prophets (A

Hence, they are the spiritual ancestors; their inheritance is spiritual and inward and the birth is a second, malakuti birth. After the prophets, the function of instruction and rearing lies with the ulama, who are the real heirs of the prophets. The prophets (A) by virtue of this spiritual station, were not owners of wealth or concerned with the world of mulk and its corporeal affairs. Their inheritance, in virtue of this station, was nothing except knowledge and divine teachings, though by virtue of their corporeal birth and terrestrial life they possessed all the statuses associated with a human :being

(قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ.)

(Say: I am only a moral the like of you. (١٨:١١٠

By virtue of this human status, their heirs were not the learned but their own physical offsprings, and hence their legacy in respect of this bodily station can be material .wealth

This noble hadith clearly implies or rather categorically states the fact of spiritual inheritance as explained. And that which the Noble Messenger (S) meant by the words :ascribed to that master, that

نَحْنُ مَعَاشِرَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ لا نُوَرِّثُ.

(We, prophets, do not leave any inheritance,(١)

if we assume the authenticity of their

١- Musnad Ahmad, ii, ٤٦٣.

ascription to him-is that the legacy of the prophets by virtue of their prophetic function and spiritual inheritance is not wealth and treasure; rather, it is knowledge, .as is quite evident. Wa al-salam

Twenty-Seventh Hadith: Prayer And Concentration

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى الشَّيْخِ الأَجَلِّ والثِقَهِ الجَلِيلِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى، رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ يَزِيدَ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: فِى التَّوْرَاهِ مَكْتُوبٌ: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، تَفَرَّغْ لِعِبَادَتِى أَمْلأْ قَلْبَکَ غِنىً وَلا أَکِلْکَ إلَى طَلَبِکَ وَعَلَيَّ أنْ أَسُدَّ فَاقَتَکَ وَأَمْلَأَ قَلْبَکَ خَوْفاً مِنِّى. وَإنْ لا تَفْرَغْ لِعِبَادَتِى أَمْلأْ قَلْبَکَ شُغْلاً بِالدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ لا أَسُدَّ فَاقَتَکَ وَأَکِلْکَ إلَى طَلَبِکَ.

With my chain of transmitters reaching up to the most venerable shaykh and the trustworthy authority Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) who reports from a group of our companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ibn Mahbub, from 'Umar ibn Yazid, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A)that he said, "It is written in the Torah: O son of Man, if you 'empty' yourself (i.e. disengage yourself from all other preoccupations to make yourself available) for My worship, I will fill your heart with richness and I will not abandon you to what you seek and long for. And it will be upon Me to close the door of poverty upon you and to fill your heart with awe for Me. And if you don't 'empty' yourself for My worship, I will fill your heart with preoccupation with the world and I will not close upon you

)the door of poverty and will abandon you to what you seek."(1)

Exposition

Tafarrugh belongs to the verbal form tafa'ul, and tafarragha li kadha means 'he has devoted all his time to such and such a thing without being occupied with anything else.' The tafarrugh of the heart for the sake of worship ('ibadah) means 'emptying' it for the sake of worship of attention to anything else. The lexicographers explain the verb mala'a (filled) as follows:

مَلأَ الإنَاءَ ماءً ومِنَ الماءِ وبالماءِ: وضعَ فيهِ بقَدرِ ما يأخُذُهُ.

He 'filled' the vessel with water, i.e. he put in it a quantity that it can hold.

Akilu is a variant in the first person of yakilu. The lexicographers explain its usage as follows:

وَكلَ إليهِ الأمرَ: أيْ سلَّمَهُ وفَوَّضهُ وترَكه إلَيه واكتَفى به.

He 'entrusted' him with the matter, means, he turned it over to him, delegated it to him, left it to him, and put it completely in his charge.

Asuddu, a verb in the first person derived from sadda, yasuddu saddan, means closing, and is the opposite of al-fath, opening. Faqah means hajah and faqr, i.e. poverty and need. As to وَأَمْلأَ قَلْبَكَ خَوْفاً مِنِّى, apparently it (i.e. the verb أملأ) represents the first person in the imperfect tense and its being in the imperative case in conjunction with the first clause is unlikely. We shall, God willing, expound that which needs explanation in the noble tradition in the course of a few sections.

The Significance Of Prayer

Know that freedom from other preoccupations for the sake of absorption in worship ('ibadah))

.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, “kitab al-’iman wa a١-kufr’, “bab al-’ibadah”, hadith no. ١ -١

is obtainable through possessing unoccupied time and an unoccupied heart. And this is one of the most important points regarding worship, without which the presence of heart cannot be realized, and a worship performed without an attentive heart is devoid of value. That which brings about attentiveness of the heart consists of two .matters

The first of these lies in possessing unoccupied time and an unoccupied heart, and the second lies in making one's heart understand the importance of worship. That which is meant by 'unoccupied time' is that one should set aside a certain time out of his day and night hours exclusively for the sake of worship wherein he should devote himself solely to worship without engaging in any other preoccupation. If one were to understand that worship is an important thing whose significance is greater than any other activity, or, rather, that it is something of incomparable significance, he would allocate a certain time to it and be careful to observe its timings. In the following, we .shall try to cast some light on this matter

A devout person should be observant of the times of his worship under every circumstance. Of course, he should observe the timings of salat, which is the most important of the acts of worship, and carry it out in the most meritorious part of its time, refraining from engaging in any other work during those times. In the same way as he assigns a certain time to making an earning and for study

and debate, he should do the same in respect of these acts of worship, in whose time he must be free from other preoccupations, so that he can achieve concentration of the heart, which makes up the quintessence and kernel of ‘ibadah.

But should he, like this author, offer his prayers out of compulsion and consider the performance of the worship of the Lord as a superfluous matter, he would, of course, delay it as long as it can be delayed and when he offers it offer it in a perfunctory manner, considering it as an impediment in the way of what he imagines to be important tasks. However, such a worship has not only no spiritual brilliance, it deserves Divine wrath, and such a person is one who makes light of salat and neglects it as something trivial. I seek refuge in God from making light of salat and not giving it its due importance. These pages cannot contain all the traditions that exist in this context, and sere we will mention a few of them for the sake of lesson.

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: لا تَتَهَاوَنْ بِصَلاتِکَ فَإِنَّ النَّبِیَّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ: لَیْسَ مِنِّی مَنِ اسْتَخَفَّ بِصَلاتِهِ، لَیْسَ مِنِّی مَنْ شَرِبَ مُسْکِراً، لا یَرِدُ عَلَیَّ الحَوْضَ لا وَاللهِ.

Muhammad ibn Ya’qub (al-Kulayni) reports with his isnad from Abu Ja’far (A) that he said to Zurarah (R): Don’t be negligent in regard to your prayers. Verily, the Prophet (S) said

on his death-bed, “The one who makes light of his prayers does not belong to me, nor the one who takes intoxicating drinks, and, by God, he will not return to me at the Pond (of al-Kawthar).”(۱)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی بَصِیرٍقَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو الحَسَنِ الأَوَّلُ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: لَمَّا حَضَرَتْ أَبِی الوَفَاهُ قَالَ لِی: یَا بُنَیَّ، لا یَنَالُ شَفَاعَتَنَا مَنِ اسْتَخَفَّ بِالصَّلاهِ.

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Basir that Abu al-Hasan al-Awwal (Imam al-Kazim) (A) said: At the time of his death my father said to me, “My son, the one who makes light of salat will not receive our intercession.”(۲)

There are a large number of traditions concerning this matter, but these that have been cited are sufficient for those who will take a lesson. God knows what a great calamity it is to be separated from the Noble Messenger (S) and to be deprived of the support of that master! What a great humiliation is it that is entailed by deprival from the intercession of that master and his majestic Household! Don’t imagine that anyone will receive Divine forgiveness and enter the promised Paradise without the intercession and protection of that noble personage.

Now see for yourself whether preferring every trivial matter, or rather something which is of imaginary benefit, to prayer, which is the apple of the eye of the Noble Messenger (S) and a great means of Divine mercy, and treating it with negligence, delaying it without any excuse until the end of its time and not observing

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۱- Furu’ al-Kafi, iii, ۲۶۹.

۲- Furu’ al-Kafi, iii, ۲۷۰.

its prerequisites is not equal to-slighting it and making light of it. If it is, know that you have, in accordance with the testimony of the Noble Messenger (S) and that of the immaculate Imams (A) gone out of their wilayah and will not attain to their .intercession

Now if you stand in need of their intercession and wish to belong to the ummah of the Noble Messenger (S) then treasure this divine trust and give it importance, or face the consequences of your neglect. God, the Most Exalted, and His awliya' have no need of the works of yours and mine, but it is feared that if you fail to give it its due importance, it will lead you to abandon it altogether and that will ultimately lead you to .deny it as duty, bringing you to certain damnation and everlasting wretchedness

More important than finding free and unoccupied time for salat is possessing a free and unoccupied heart. Rather, the former is a prerequisite for obtaining the latter. Having an unoccupied heart means that at the time of worship one must disengage himself from mundane engagements and cares and turn his heart away from all kinds of matters and cares and make it entirely empty and unencumbered for attending to worship and supplication with God Almighty. As long as one cannot purge his heart of these matters, he cannot obtain the necessary state of extrication for himself and his .worship

But our misfortune is that we store up all

the various kinds of stray thoughts and cares for the time of worship. As soon as we say the takbirat al'ihram of salat, it is as if we have opened a shop or a ledger of accounts or an album. Our heart wanders away to other matters and we become totally oblivious of worship. When we come to ourselves, it is when we have reached the moment of salam, having passed through the salat as a matter of habit! Truly, this .kind of worship is a disgrace and this mode of supplicating with the Lord is shameful

My dear, consider the prayers you offer to God by comparing them with talk and conversation with one of His insignificant creatures. When talking to a stranger-to say nothing of a friend you attend to him with all your attention and are oblivious of anyone else as long as you are engaged in conversation with him. But why is it that while engaging in communication and prayer with your Provider and the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds you are totally heedless of Him and attentive to other matters? Is the station and worth of creatures greater than that of the Sacred ?Essence of the Lord

Is conversation with them more valuable than supplication with the Fulfiller of needs. Yes, I and you do not know the significance of supplication with God. We consider these divine duties as a cumbersome burden, and, of course, a matter that is a cumbrous weight on one will

.not be significant for him

Hence, that which needs correction is the source of this stream. We must obtain faith in God and the exhortations of the prophets so as to reform our sorry state. All our misfortunes arise from the weakness of our faith and the shaky character of our conviction. The faith of Sayyid ibn Tawus (R)had brought him to such a point that he used to celebrate every year the anniversary of the day of his becoming mukallaf, for on that day God had bestowed upon him the permission to engage in His worship and had dressed him in the robes of taklif. Really, just imagine, what purity and brilliance !that heart of his had

And if the practice of that glorious Sayyid is 'tot it binding proof (hujjah) for you, the practice of the Master of Monotheists (Sayyid al-Muwahhidin, i.e. the Prophet [S]) and his infallible descendants is, of course, a hujjah for you. Study the condition of those noble souls and the character of their worship and prayers. At the time of salat the color of their blessed faces would pale and their bodies would tremble with the fear lest there should occur some lapse in the course of this divine observance, although .they were infallible

It is well-known concerning the Mawla ('Ali) that ail arrow that had pierced his blessed foot and removing which was intolerably painful for him, was taken out when he was .engaged in salat and he did not even notice its removal

My

dear, such a thing is not impossible. Such things occur quite often for people in the ordinary course of life. At times, a man becomes totally oblivious of everything in the state of anger or love. One of our reliable friends used to narrate that "Once during a fight with a group of ruffians in Isfahan, I noticed that some of them struck me with their fists and I did not know what kind of blows they were. Later when the fight was over and I came to myself, I realized that. I had several wounds made by a knife with which they had struck me. I was bedridden for several days before I recovered from those wounds."

Of course, the reason behind it is obvious: when the total attention of the soul is concentrated on a certain matter, it becomes totally oblivious of the body and insensitive to its feelings. All its attention is absorbed by that single thing. In our own fights, encounters or heated debates in a gathering—may God be our refuge from these—we have often noticed that we become totally heedless of everything else that takes place around us. However, regrettably, everything absorbs our total attention except the worship of the Lord, and that is why we tend to regard such episodes (as that of Imam 'Ali) as improbable.

In any case, detachment of the heart from everything except God is an important matter and one must try to attain it at all costs. The means of

achieving it is also possible and attainable. It can be achieved with the exercise of some care and vigilance. One should make effort for some time to bring the flights of the bird of his thought under control and restrain it whenever it wishes to fly from one branch to another. After a period of watchfulness, the mind becomes tractable and docile and refrains from engaging in random thoughts. In accord with the aphorism goodness becomes a habit with it and, attaining detachment from other- وَالخَيرُ عادَةٌ .preoccupations, it becomes attentive to God and His worship

Of foremost importance amongst the prerequisites of worship is the attention of the heart, on which depends the soul and essence of worship and without which it has no .value and acceptability near God, the Exalted, as mentioned in sacred traditions

الكَافِى بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ وَأَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ أَنَّهُمَا قَالا: إِنَّمَا لَكَ مِنْ صَلاتِكَ مَا أَقْبَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهَا، فَإِنْ أَوْهَمَهَا كُلَّهَا أَوْ غَفِلَ عَنْ آدَابِهَا لُفَّتْ فَضُرِبَ بِهَا وَجْهُ صَاحِبِهَا.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that they said to Fudayl ibn Yasar: The reward that you derive from your salat is limited to the extent that you offer it with an attentive heart. And if someone should vitiate all of (it or neglect its etiquette, it is wound up and thrown at the face of its offerer.(١

وَرَوَى الشَّيْخُ الأَقْدَمُ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الحَسَنِ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ فِى التَّهْذِيبِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الثُّمَالِيِّ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ الحُسَيْنِ

.Furu' al-Kafi, iii, ٣۶٣ -١

عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ يُصَلِّى فَسَقَطَ رِدَاؤُهُ عَنْ مَنْكِبِهِ فَلَمْ يُسَوِّهِ حَتَّى فَرَغَ مِنْ صَلاتِهِ. قَالَ: فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَ: وَيْحَكَ! أَتَدْرِى بَيْنَ يَدَىْ مَنْ كُنْتُ؟ إِنَّ العَبْدَ لا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهُ صَلاةٌ إِلا مَا أَقْبَلَ مِنْهَا. فَقُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، هَلَكْنَا! قَالَ: كَلا، إِنَّ اللهَ مُتَمِّمٌ ذَلِكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِالنَّوَافِلِ.

Al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi (R) reports in al-Tahdhib with his isnad from Abu Hamzah al-Thumali that he said, “I saw ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, Imam al-Sajjad (A), offering prayer, when the cloak slipped from his shoulders. The Imam did not arrange it until he had finished his prayer. When I questioned him about it, he said, “Woe to you, don’t you know before whom I stood? Nothing is accepted of a devotee’s prayer except what he offers with the proper attention of his heart.” Thereupon, I said to him, “May I be ransomed for you, (if that is so) then we (i.e. the like of us) are doomed!” He replied, “No indeed. Verily God compensates for that for the faithful by the means of supererogatory prayers.”(١)

وَعَنِ الخِصَالِ: بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِى حَدِيثِ الأَرْبَعْمِائَةِ قَالَ: لا يَقُومَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ فِى الصَّلاةِ مُتَكَاسِلًا وَلا نَاعِساً، وَلا يُفَكِّرَنَّ فِى نَفْسِهِ فَإِنَّهُ بَيْنَ يَدَىْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَإِنَّمَا لِلْعَبْدِ مِنْ صَلاتِهِ مَا أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهَا بِقَلْبِهِ.

In al-Khisal, (al-Shaykh al-Saduq) reports with his isnad from ‘Ali (A) that he said, “None of you should ever stand for salat in a lazy or drowsy state, nor should you let (random) thoughts pass through your mind (in the state of salat).”

١- Al-Hurr al-’Amili, Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, iv, ٦٨٨.

For, in that state, you stand before your Glorious and Almighty Lord. Verily, the reward a devotee derives from prayer is equal to the extent of it that he offers with (an attentive heart."(۱)

There are many traditions on this theme and concerning the merit of attentiveness. .Here we will cite some of them, which are sufficient for those who will take lesson

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الحُسَيْنِ صَدُوقِ الطَّائِفَهِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ يَعْفُورَ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا عَبْدَاللهِ، إِذَا صَلَّيْتَ صَلاهَ فَرِيضَهٍ فَصَلِّهَا لِوَقْتِهَا صَلاهَ مُوَدِّعٍ يَخَافُ أَنْ لا يَعُودَ إِلَيْهَا، ثُمَّ اصْرِفْ بِبَصَرِکَ إِلَی مَوْضِعِ سُجُودِکَ، فَلَوْ تَعْلَمُ مَنْ عَنْ يَمِينِکَ وَعَنْ شَمَالِکَ لأَحْسَنْتَ صَلاتَکَ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّکَ بَيْنَ يَدَیْ مَنْ يَرَاکَ وَلا تَرَاهُ.

Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, the saduq of the community, reports with his isnad from 'Abd Allah ibn Abi Ya'fur that Imam al-Sadiq (A) said to him, "O 'Abd Allah, when you offer salat, pray like someone who bids farewell and fears that he will never return (i.e. pray in such a manner as if it were the last prayer of your life). Then fix your gaze on the point of your prostration. If you know that there is someone on your left or right, you take more care in offering your salat; then know that you stand in (front of Someone Who sees you and you don't see Him."(۲)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِی حَدِيثٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: إِنِّی لأُحِبُّ الرَّجُلَ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْکُمْ إِذَا قَامَ فِی صَلاهِ فَرِيضَهٍ

.Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, iv, ۶۸۷ -۱
.Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, iv, ۶۸۵ -۲

أنْ يُقْبِلَ بِقَلْبِهِ إلَى اللهِ تَعالَى وَلا يُشْغِلَ قَلْبَهُ بِأَمْرِ الدُّنْيا فَلَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُقْبِلُ بِقَلْبِهِ فِى صَلاتِهِ إلَى اللهِ تَعالَى إلا أَقْبَلَ اللهُ إلَيْهِ بِوَجْهِهِ وَأَقْبَلَ بِقُلُوبِ المُؤْمِنِينَ إلَيْهِ بِالمَحَبَّهِ بَعْدَ حُبِّ اللهِ إيَّاهُ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "Dear to me is the believer from among you who attends to God with his heart at the time of prayer and does not preoccupy his heart with any mundane matter. For whenever a devotee turns with his heart to God, the Exalted, during prayer, God turns His face towards him, and turns towards him the hearts of the faithful who regard him with affection, following God's love of him. "(1)

Just reflect what kind of good news is this that the Truthful One (al-Sadiq) of the Family of Muhammad (A) gives to the faithful! Alas, we, poor folk, who dwell in nescience and are devoid of attentiveness to God, the Exalted, unaware of His friendship, and liken His love to that of His creatures! Those who possess gnosis (ma'rifah) state that God, the Exalted, removes blindfolds from the sight of those whom He loves, and God knows what nobilities lie in freedom from such a blindness. The ultimate hope and goal of the awliya' has lain in this freedom from nescience. And the Commander of the Faithful (A) and his noble descendants say in the supplications known as the Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah:

اِلَهِى هَبْ لِى كَمالَ الانْقِطاعِ إلَيْکَ وَأَنِرْ أَبْصارَ قُلُوبِنا بِضِياءِ نَظَرِها إلَيْکَ حَتَّى تَخْرِقَ أَبْصارُ القُلُوبِ حُجُبَ النُّورِ فَتَصِلَ إلَى مَعْدِنِ العَظَمَهِ

p: ٧١٢

1- Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, iv, ٦٨٦.

وَتَصِيرَ أَرْوَاحُنَا مُعَلَّقَةً بِعِزِّ قُدْسِکَ.

My God, grant me the utmost absorption in Thee and illuminate the vision of our hearts with the light of Thy Vision, until the sight of the hearts can penetrate the curtains of light and reach the source of Greatness and until our spirits get anchored to the threshold of Thy Sanctity.(1)

My God! What is this illumination of the heart's vision that Your awliya' beseech of You and seek to attain? O Lord, what are those concealing curtains of light that our Infallible Imams spoke about? What is that source of Greatness, Glory, Sanctity, and Perfection, reaching which is the cherished goal of those sacred souls and which for always lie beyond the ken of even our theoretical knowledge, to say nothing of our experiencing and witnessing it? O God, be gracious to us, wretched and fallen creatures that we are, who neither know anything beyond gluttony and slumber, hatred and lust, nor seek to discover anything beyond them! Awaken us from this waking slumber and this stupefied sanity.

In any case, this single hadith is sufficient to induce those who are worthy of it and receptive to spend all their lives for attaining to God's love and to seek His Face. But as to the like of us, who don't belong to this field and valley, we would do better to stick to other traditions like the following ones:

عَنْ ثَوَابِ الأَعْمَالِ: بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَمَّنْ سَمِعَ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: مَنْ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَقُولُ فِيهِمَا

1- Mafatih al-jinan, "al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah."

انْصَرَفَ وَلَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللهِ ذَنْبٌ إلا غُفِرَ لَهُ.

In the Thawab al-a'mal, al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports with his chain of transmitters from someone who heard Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he used to say: "One who offers two rak'ahs of salat with the knowledge of what he says therein, he does not finish them (without God forgiving him every sin that there is between him and God."(١)

The Various Levels Of Concentration

Having known that an attentive heart is the soul and heart of worship and that its luminosity and degree of excellence depend on the attentiveness of the heart and its degree, it should be known that there are different levels of the heart's attention. Some of these levels are special to the awliya' of God and others are incapable of climbing to those heights; but some of its levels are attainable for the common people. And it should be known that attention in worship is generally divisible into two main kinds: one of these is attention of the heart to worship and the other is attention .of the heart to God

Before explaining this issue, we are forced to mention one preliminary matter, which is this. The gnostics say that worship is, absolutely, glorification of the Lord. However, each of the various kinds of worship is a praise of God in accordance with one of His Names and Attributes, excepting salat, which is glorification of God with all of His Names and Attributes. Earlier it was mentioned in the exposition of some traditions that praise of the

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١- Mafatih al-jinan, iv, ۶٨٨.

.Worshipped One is a proclivity ingrained in all human beings

It is a necessity demanded by nature that makes man submit in humility to the absolutely Perfect One, the absolutely Beautiful One, the absolute Provider and the absolutely Great. And since no one can discover the real significance of the praise of the Sacred Essence-for that depends upon the knowledge of the Essence and its Attributes and the reality of the relation between the Manifest and the Hidden it is .impossible except through the means of revelation and divine inspiration

Accordingly, the acts of worship are absolutely prescriptive and laid down by God, and no one has the right to legislate in this regard and innovate some rite of worship. The kind of ceremonies of homage and reverence that are in vogue in the courts of kings and princes have no worth or value before His Sacred Essence. Hence, man should sit up and take notice, and learn the manner of worship or devotion through the agency of revelation and prophethood and refrain from making any kind of unauthorized .dispensations in this regard

Having known that worship is glorification of the Worshipped One, one should note, as pointed out earlier, that attention of the heart is of two main kinds: attention to .worship and attention to the Worshipped One

Attention To Worship

There are various degrees of this kind of attention, which are divisible into two main levels. One of these is attention of an incomplete and summary character. In this kind of attention, while

performing an act of worship—whatever that may be, whether related to taharah, such as wudu’ or ghusl, or to prayer, fasting, or Hajj pilgrimage or something else-one is attentive in a general way that he is magnifying the Lord, though he himself does not know the nature of his own glorification nor understands the significance of any of the Divine Names. Our shaykh, the perfect ‘arif that he was, and may my soul be his ransom, used to mention an analogy comparing this kind of worship to the recital of a .child who is asked to recite a panegyric in the praise of someone

The child, who himself does not understand the panegyric, is told that it is meant to eulogize the person in whose presence it is read. As he recites it, the child knows summarily that he is eulogizing the person praised without knowing the character of the praise. We, too, who are children singing the praise of God, do not know the secrets that lie in these acts of worship. Neither do we understand the character of relation that each of these divine forms has to some Divine Name, nor do we know in .what way it is glorification of God

However, we should at least be cognizant of the fact that each of those acts of worship is magnification of the absolutely Perfect One, of the One Who is absolutely worthy of all praise and worship, a form that the Sacred Essence Itself has prescribed for

Its glorification and commanded us to magnify It through its means in Its sacred .presence

Another of the levels of attentiveness of the heart is its detailed attention to worship; its complete attainment is not possible for anyone except the sincere awliya' and the gnostics. However, some of its lower degrees are attainable for others, the first stage wherein is concentration on the meaning of the words during salat and prayer. The .tradition cited earlier from the Thawab al-'a'mal refers to this stage

Another stage of it is that one should understand to the extent of his capacity the mysteries of worship and the character of glorification of the Worshipped One underlying each of the ritual forms. The gnostics have, to a certain extent, described the mysteries of salat and other forms of worship and have benefited to the extent of their capacity from the statements contained in the traditions of the Infallible Ones (A). Although an understanding of the reality of the matter is rarely attained by anyone, whatever extent of it that has been mentioned is a free gift for those who .have an aptitude for it

Attention To The Worshipped One

As to the heart's attention to the Worshipped One, that also consists of various degrees that fall into three main levels. One of them pertains to concentrating the heart, on revelations (tajalliyat) of Divine Acts. Another of them relates to concentrating the heart on revelations of Names and Attributes. The third consists of concentrating with the heart on revelations of the Essence. Each

of these levels consists of four planes that may be generally put as the plane of knowledge, the plane of faith, the plane of direct experience, and the plane of absorption (or annihilation, fana').

That which is meant by concentrating the heart on revelations of Acts on the plane of knowledge is that in it the wayfaring devotee knows on the level of theoretical knowledge and metaphysical proof that all the levels of existence and all the visible and unseen domains of being are manifestation of the effusion of the Most Sacred Essence, and that all of them, right from the lower levels of the world of nature to the fountainhead of the higher malakut and the greater jabarut, are equally and uniformly present before His Sanctity. They are all manifestations of His unfolding Will, as mentioned in the following sacred tradition from al-Kafi

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: خَلَقَ اللهُ المَشِيَّهَ بِنَفْسِهَا ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الأَشْيَاءَ بِالمَشِيَّهِ.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "God created the Will by itself. Then He brought all things into existence through the agency of the Will."(1)

Hence, the Will by itself is manifestation of the Essence and other existents have been created through its means. We don't however intend to give here the proof of this sublime matter. The devotee who understands this matter on the plane of theory and metaphysical proof, knows that his own being, as well as his worship, knowledge, will, heart, the actions of his heart, and his inward and outward being all of them

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-tawhid", "bab al-'iradah, annaha min sifat al-fi'l' hadith no. ۴.

are present before His Sanctity or, rather, they are presence itself. Should the pen of his intellect inscribe this truth on the tablet of his heart and should the heart attain conviction in this certain, axiomatic premise by the means of theoretical and practical exercises, he will obtain attention of the heart to the revelations on the plane of faith.

After the perfection of this faith and following the exercises and austerities and attainment of the perfect piety of the heart, the wayfarer is afforded by Divine guidance to partake of the tajalliyat of Acts, directly experiencing them with his heart, until his heart becomes the complete mirror of those tajalliyat and he achieves the state of swoon (sa'q) and annihilation (fana'). This is the ultimate stage of attention that ultimately leads the attentive one to be absorbed in the tajalliyat of Acts. Many of the wayfarers of the path of gnosis remain forever immersed in this state of swoon and do not come to themselves.

And should the wayfarer's heart have a greater capacity than this as a result of the light of the Most Sacred Effusion (fayd al-aqdas) in pre-eternity, he will recover from this swoon, resume his sociability (uns) and return to his domain and receive the tajalliyat of Names and, traversing similar stages, reach annihilation in Attributes (fana' al-sifati) in proportion to his permanent prototype ('ayn al-thabit), becoming annihilated in one of the Divine Names. Many wayfarers of the mystic path remain in the state of annihilation

in Names (fana' al-asmai) and do not come to themselves. Perhaps the following :'sacred tradition is a reference to this group of awliya

إنَّ أَوْلِيائِی تَحْتَ قِبابِی لا یَعْرِفُهُمْ غَیْرِی.

(Verily, My awliya', under My vault (i.e. the sky), are known to none except Me.(١)

And should his capacity, endowed to him by manifestation of the Most Sacred Effusion (in pre-eternity), be of a greater extent than this, he will recover from this swoon and annihilation, regain sociability, come to himself and receive the tajalliyat of the Essence, until, on reaching the last stage of annihilation in Essence and total swoon, :his journey ends and complete annihilation is attained. Some have said that the verse

(وَمَنْ یَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَیْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ یُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ.)

Whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then (death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God.(۴:۱۰۰

And sometimes the wayfarer may recover from this station, whereupon, by virtue of his capacity and in accordance with the scope of his permanent prototype, he devotes :himself to the guidance of the creatures

(یَا أَیُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ. قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ.)

(O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise, and warn! (۷۴:۱-۲

And should his permanent prototype be subject to the Greatest Divine Name, he would be the completing arc of the circle of prophethood, such as was the case with the Noble Messenger and the Great Seal of the Prophets (S). For the permanent prototype of none among the creatures, from the first to the

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.Ahadith qudsi. Source untraced -١

last one, or that of any of the prophets and messengers, conformed to the Greatest .Divine Name nor did it reveal the Divine Essence in all its aspects

Hence, the Essential Reality of the Messenger manifests all the aspects of the Essence and this manifestation culminated in guidance, intuiting the total span of Reality and bringing prophethood to its culmination by his sacred existence. And if, supposedly, any of the awliya' were to reach this station by following the sacred essence (of the Prophet) and through his guidance, his intuition (kashf) would be identical to it and repetition in legislation would not be permissible. Thus, the circle of prophethood was completed by his sacred being and the last brick was laid in the .circle of prophethood, as mentioned in hadith

It should be known that the worship and spiritual states of those who stand on each of the stations mentioned, are very different and extremely various. Each of them partakes of prayer a portion that is not possessed by one who has not reached that station. Of course, that which was experienced by Imam al-Sadiq (A) during the course of 'ibadah is something that is not possible for others. It is narrated from :Sayyid Ibn Tawus (Q) as mentioned in the Falah al-sa'il, that he said

فَقَدْ رُوِىَ أنَّ مَوْلانَا جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ كَانَ يَتْلُو الْقُرْآنَ فِى صَلاتِهِ فَغُشِىَ عَلَيْهِ. فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ سُئِلَ: مَا الَّذِى أَوْجَبَ مَا انْتَهَتْ حَالُكَ إلَيْهِ؟ فَقَالَ مَا مَعْنَاهُ: مَا زِلْتُ أُكَرِّرُ آيَاتِ الْقُرْآنِ حَتَّى

بَلَغْتُ إلَى حالٍ كَأَنَّنِی سَمِعْتُها مُشافَهَهً مِمَّنْ أَنْزَلَها عَلَی المُکاشَفهِ وَالعِیانِ. فَلَمْ تَقُمِ القُوَّهُ البَشَرِیَّهُ بِمُکاشَفهِ الجَلالَهِ الإلَهِیَّهِ.

It has been narrated that our master, Ja’far ibn Muhammad al Sadiq (A) was once reciting the Qur’an in his salat. He went into a swoon, and when he emerged from it he was asked, “What was that that led you into that state?” He gave a reply, which meant, “I continued repeating verses of the Qur’an until I reached a state wherein it was as if I heard them directly from Him Who had sent them down. And it is beyond human power to witness Divine glory.”(1)

The states that occurred to the Noble Messenger (S) were such that the like of them have not been experienced by any other creature, as mentioned in this famous tradition:

لِی مَعَ اللهِ حالٌ لا یَسَعُهُ مَلَکٌ مُقَرَّبٌ وَلا نَبِیٌّ مُرْسَلٌ.

I experience a state with God for which neither an archangel nor an apostolic prophet has the capacity.(2)

Let us leave this discourse here for we do not partake of it anything except words. That which is important for the like of us is that, now that we are incapable of attaining to the stations of the awliya’, we must refrain from negating their truth. Rather, we must acquiesce to them, for acquiescence to the affair of the awliya’ is very beneficial and its negation—may God be our refuge—is greatly harmful.

اللَّهُمَّ إنِّی مُسَلِّمٌ لأَمْرِهِمْ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَیْهِمْ أَجْمَعِینَ.

O God, I acquiesce in their affair, may God’s benedictions be

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1- Falah al-sa’il, ۱۰۷.

2- See Furuzanfar, Ahadith al-Mathnawi. ۳۹.

.upon them all

The Incarnation Of Works In The Hereafter

Know that concentration of the heart in worship cannot be obtained without making it understand the significance of the acts of worship, and that is not possible without understanding their mysteries and realities. Although such a thing is beyond our ken, I will, to the extent of the capacity of someone like me, mention here that which can be inferred from the traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A)and the statements of the .gnostics, to the extent that is appropriate for these pages

You should know-as has been repeatedly mentioned earlier-that every one of virtuous actions and acts of worship has an esoteric and malakuti form and makes an effect on the devotee's heart. As to the esoteric and inward form, they are what go into the building of the worlds of Barzakh and the physical Paradise, for the grounds of Paradise are empty plains as mentioned in traditions. Our prayers and works are the material for their building, as mentioned in hadith, and there are many verses in the Sacred Book of God that indicate the incarnation of works, like these statements of :God Almighty

(فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight (will see it. (۹۹:۷-۸

(وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا.)

(And they find all that they did confronting them. (۱۸:۴۹

The traditions that indicate the incarnation of works and their possession of hidden malakuti forms are many and scattered throughout

.the various chapters and here we will confine ourselves to a few of them

رَوَى الصَّدُوقُ قُدِّسَ سِرُّهُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ صَلَّى الصَّلَوَاتِ المَفْرُوضَاتِ فِى أَوَّلِ وَقْتِهَا فَأَقَامَ حُدُودَهَا، رَفَعَهَا المَلَكُ إلَى السَّمَاءِ بَيْضَاءَ نَقِيَّةً وَهِىَ تَهْتِفُ بِهِ: حَفِظَكَ اللهُ كَمَا حَفِظْتَنِى وَاسْتَوْدَعَكَ اللهُ كَمَا اسْتَوْدَعْتَنِى مَلَكاً كَرِيماً. وَمَنْ صَلاّهَا بَعْدَ وَقْتِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ عِلَّةٍ فَلَمْ يُقِمْ حُدُودَهَا رَفَعَهَا المَلَكُ سَوْدَاءَ مُظْلِمَةً وَهِىَ تَهْتِفُ بِهِ: ضَيَّعْتَنِى ضَيَّعَكَ اللهُ كَمَا ضَيَّعْتَنِى وَلا رَعَاكَ اللهُ كَمَا لَمْ تَرْعَنِى.

Al-Shaykh al-Saduq (Q) reports with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said: When someone offers an obligatory salat at the beginning of its time and observes its prerequisites, an angel takes it up to the heaven. White and pure, it (i.e. the salat) says, “May God take care of you as you took care of me. I have been delivered into the custody of a noble angel.” But when someone offers it without any excuse after its time has elapsed and does not observe its requisite manners, black and dark, it is taken up by an angel, while it calls out to him (i.e. its offerer), “You neglected me. May God neglect you in the same manner that you neglected me. May God not take care of (you in the same way that you did not take care of me.”(۱

Aside from the malakuti forms of works, that which can be inferred from this noble tradition is that they possess life and its properties. This is

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.Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, iii, ۹۰, with a slight difference of wording -۱

also inferable from a certain metaphysical proof and the traditions indicate that all existents have a malakuti life, or rather the world of malakut is Life and consciousness :through and through, as spelled out by this Qur'anic verse

(وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ.)

(Surely, the abode of the Hereafter is life, did they but know. (٢٩:۶۴

وَفِی الکَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فِی حَدِیثٍ طَوِیلٍ: إِذَا بَعَثَ اللهُ المُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَبْرِهِ خَرَجَ مَعَهُ مِثَالٌ یَقْدِمُ أَمَامَهُ. کُلَّمَا رَأَی المُؤْمِنُ هَوْلاً مِنْ أَهْوَالِ یَوْمِ القِیَامَهِ قَالَ لَهُ المِثَالُ: لا تَفْزَعْ وَلا تَحْزَنْ وَأَبْشِرْ بِالسُّرُورِ وَالکَرَامَهِ مِنَ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، حَتَّی یَقِفَ بَیْنَ یَدَیِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَیُحَاسِبُهُ حِسَاباً یَسِیراً وَیَأْمُرُ بِهِ إِلَی الجَنَّهِ، وَالمِثَالُ أَمَامَهُ، فَیَقُولُ لَهُ المُؤْمِنُ: یَرْحَمُکَ اللهُ، نِعْمَ الخَارِجُ! خَرَجْتَ مَعِی مِنْ قَبْرِی وَمَا زِلْتَ تُبَشِّرُنِی بِالسُّرُورِ وَالکَرَامَهِ مِنَ اللهِ حَتَّی رَأَیْتُ ذَلِکَ. فَیَقُولُ مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ فَیَقُولُ: أَنَا السُّرُورُ الَّذِی کُنْتَ أَدْخَلْتَ عَلَی أَخِیکَ المُؤْمِنِ فِی الدُّنْیَا، خَلَقَنِیَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْهُ لأُبَشِّرَکَ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said in the course of a long tradition: When the man of faith is resurrected from his grave by God, an ethereal form emerges with him that walks in front of him. Every time the man of faith beholds any horror from among the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, that form says to him, "Don't fear and don't grieve, and receive the good news of joy and dignity from God, Almighty and Glorious." Until he stops before God, Almighty and

Glorious, Who makes a lenient reckoning of his deeds and orders him to enter Paradise, (and he enters it) with the form walking ahead of him. Thereupon the believer will say to it, "May God be gracious to you, you were a good companion to come out with me from my grave. You have continued to give me the glad tidings of joy and dignity from God until I saw them for myself." Then he will ask it, "Who are you?" The form will reply, "I am the joy that you used to bring to your brother in faith in the world. God, Almighty and Glorious, created me from it in order to give you the good news."(١)

This noble tradition also clearly indicates the possession of body and form by works in the life of the Hereafter. The most venerated Shaykh Baha' al-Din (Q) also remarks in his commentary on this noble tradition, "Some traditions indicate the incarnation of beliefs as well. Hence righteous actions and beliefs will appear in bright and fair-looking forms, causing extreme joy and delight to their owners. Evil deeds and beliefs will appear in dark and ugly forms, causing extreme grief and agony to their owners, as stated by a group of exegetes under this noble verse:

(يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا.)

The day every soul shall find what it has done of good brought forward, and what it has done n

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١ -- Usul al-Kafi, ii, "Kitab al-'imam wa al-kufr" "bab idkhal al-surur 'ala al-mu'minin"hadith no. ٨.

(f evil; it will wish if there were only a far span between itself and that, (٣:٣٠

:And we are led to the same interpretation by this statement of God, the Exalted

(يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ. فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

Upon that day men shall issue in scatterings to see their works, and whoso has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoso has done an atom's weight of evil (shall see it. (٩٩:۶-٨

And those who believe that there is an assumed omission in this noble verse and i.e. to see the reward of their works), not لِيُرَوا جَزَاءَ أَعْمـالِهِم argue that what is meant is to refer to works, have missed the point."(١) Here ends يَرَهُ considering the pronoun in .the translation of his statements, may God elevate his noble station

Here some eminent traditionists have expressed certain views, which better remain unsaid. These views arise from their surmise that belief in the incarnation of works contradicts the belief in bodily resurrection, although the former supports the latter and the word tamaththul (assumption of bodily form) in this noble tradition has a :similar signification to what it has in this statement of God, the Exalted

(فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا.)

Then We sent unto her [i.e. Mary) Our Spirit,) that presented itself to her in the form) (of a man without fault. (١٩:١٧

Here the spirit did really assume a bodily form, which was not something imaginary, like the form that

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Al-Shaykh al-Bahai, al- Arba'in, p. ٢٠٢, see the commentary on the thirty third - ١ .hadith

appears in dreams. In any case, divesting such verses as these and traditions of their literal meanings and that despite their conformity to firm metaphysical proofs which are established in their own proper place-solely because they do not fit in with our intelligence and are in conformity with the creed of the philosophers and metaphysicians is not a commendable thing. The best approach is to adopt .'acquiescence before the Sacred Lord and the infallible awliya

Thus, it is known that every work that receives acceptance in the sacred Divine court' has a fair and beautiful form in accordance with its nature-such as the houris, palaces, the high gardens and the flowing stream of Paradise. No being comes into existence arbitrarily and extravagantly. Rather, there are certain rational relationships that are involved, whose discovery is not possible for anyone except the perfect awliya'. The matter, to put it in a nutshell, is subject to rational and .metaphysical criteria

Now that it is known that the life of the Hereafter and its joys depend on works, whose consummate forms are transferred to that world, those works are acts of worship that this community has come to know about through the consummate intuition of Muhammad (S). The excellence and beauty of these works depend on one's intentions and attention of one's heart as well as the observance of its requisite .manners

Should a work be devoid of all or some of these conditions, it would be devoid of validity or, rather, would possess an ugly

and distorted form which he will encounter in the other world, as we came to know .through the traditions

Hence it is incumbent upon every person who believes in the unseen world and the traditions of the prophets, the awliya' and the gnostics, and cares about eternal and immortal life, to improve his works through every possible effort and austerity. And after that their outward aspect and form is brought into conformity with the rules of ijtihad or the opinion of the fuqaha' (R), he should endeavor to reform their inner character, taking all the care that he can to perform at least the wajibat with the due attention of the heart and try to remove their shortcomings and, then, those of the nawafil, for as mentioned in the noble traditions the nawafil compensate for the .defects of the fara'id and cause them to be accepted

فِی العِلَلِ: بإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا جُعِلَتِ النَّافِلَهُ لِیَتُمَّ بِهَا مَا یَفْسُدُ مِنَ الفَرِیضَهِ.

In the 'Ilal al-shara'i, (al-Shaykh al-Saduq) reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A)that he said; "Verily the supererogatory acts of worship have been laid down in (order to compensate for that which is vitiated out of the obligatory acts."(۱)

وَرَوَی الشَّیْخُ قُدِّسَ سِرُّهُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی بَصِیرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: یُرْفَعُ لِلرَّجُلِ مِنَ الصَّلاهِ رُبُعُهَا أَوْ ثُمُنُهَا أَوْ نِصْفُهَا أَوْ أَکْثَرُ بِقَدَرِ مَا سَهَا. وَلَکِنَّ اللهَ یُتِمُّ ذَلِکَ بِالنَّوَافِلِ.

Al-Shaykh al-Tusi (Q) reports with his isnad from Abu Basir that Imam al-Sadiq (A) said, "Out of the

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, ii, ۵۴ -۱

salat offered by a man only .a half of it or a one-fourth or a one-eighth rises to heaven However, God the (١)(بِقَدَرِ مَا سَهَا) in accordance with the extent of his lapses therein (Exalted, compensates for it through the means of the supererogatory prayers."(٢

There are many other traditions of this kind, and it is obvious that we are not free from lapses, forgetfulness, absentmindedness and other matters that vitiate prayer or its perfection. God, the Exalted, with His consummate grace, has appointed the nawafil to enable us to compensate for such shortcomings. Of course, it is essential to avoid, as far as possible, any kind of negligence in this matter and not to neglect the .nawafil

In any case, my dear, do come out a bit from this state of neglect; reflect about your affair and examine the record of your deeds. Beware lest the works that you imagine to be righteous deeds, such as prayers, fasts, Hajj and the like, should themselves .become the means of your wretchedness and disgrace in the other world

Hence, so long its the opportunity remains, examine your own conduct and place your acts in the balance of scrutiny and in the scales of the Shari'ah and the wilayah of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) and find out the extent of their soundness and viciousness, their perfection and defectiveness, and make amends as long as there remains time and opportunity. And should you fail to examine your own account here and to put it ,straight

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١ - Author's note: As to the words of the Imam بقدر ما سها that which is meant by the noble tradition is that, as mentioned in other traditions, the amount of a prayer that ascends to God and is accepted by Him is that which is offered with an attentive heart. Hence the words بقدر ما سها refer to the ratio, not to the amount that ascends. It is probable that by سهو here is meant tranquillity and softness of the heart, as remarked .by al-Jawhari

٢ - Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, iii, ٥۴.

your account-taking will be carried out there and your deeds will be placed in the Balance of Works and there great calamities may lie in wait for you.

Be fearful of the scales of Divine justice, never be proud of anything, and don't leave off serious effort. For a while observe the book of works of the Messenger's Ahl al-Bayt (A) who were inerrant and infallible, and contemplate regarding them. See what a tremendous difficulty lies ahead of us, and how narrow and dark is the path! Now consider the following tradition and guess the enormousness of the matter from this brief hadith:

عَنْ ذُخْرِ الطَّائِفَهِ وَفَخْرِهَا وَعِمَادِهَا مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ النُّعْمَانِ المُفِيدِ، رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، فِى الإرْشَادِ: عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ كُلْثُوم قَالَ: كُنْتُ عِنْدَ الصَّادِقِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ فَذَكَرَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِى طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فَأَطْرَاهُ وَمَدَحَهُ بِمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: وِاللهِ، مَا أَكَلَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِى طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا حَرَاماً قَطُّ حَتَّى مَضَى لِسَبِيلِهِ. وَمَا عُرِضَ لَهُ أَمْرَانِ قَطُّ هُمَا للهِ رِضىً إلا أَخَذَ بِأَشَدِّهِمَا عَلَيْهِ فِى دِينِهِ. وَمَا نَزَلَتْ بِرَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ نَازِلَهٌ إلاّ دَعَاهُ فَقَدَّمَهُ ثِقَهً بِهِ. وَمَا أَطَاقَ أَحَدٌ عَمَلَ رَسُولِ اللهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ الأُمَّهِ غَيْرُهُ. وَإنْ كَانَ لَيَعْمَلُ عَمَلَ رَجُلٍ كَأَنَّ وَجْهَهُ بَيْنَ الجَنَّهِ وَالنَّارِ؛ يَرْجُو ثَوَابَ هَذِهِ وَيَخَافُ عِقَابَ هَذِهِ. وَلَقَدْ أَعْتَقَ مِنْ مَالِهِ أَلْفَ مَمْلُوكٍ فِى طَلَبِ وَجْهِ اللهِ وَالنَّجَاهِ مِنَ النَّارِ مِمَّا كَدَّ بِيَدَيْهِ وَرَشَحَ مِنْهُ جَبِينُهُ. وَإنْ كَانَ لَيُقَوِّتُ أَهْلَهُ بِالزَّيْتِ وَالخَلِّ وَالعَجْوَهِ. وَمَا كَانَ لِبَاسُهُ إلاّ الكَرَابِيسُ. إذَا فَضَلَ شَيْءٌ

عَنْ يَدِهِ مِنْ كُمِّهِ دَعَا بِالجَلَمِ فَقَصَّهُ. وَمَا أَشْبَهَهُ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ وَلا أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ أَحَدٌ أَقْرَبُ شُبْهاً بِهِ فِي لِبَاسِهِ وَفِقْهِهِ مِنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ. وَلَقَدْ دَخَلَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ - ابْنُهُ - عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ عَلَيْهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنَ العِبَادَةِ مَا لَمْ يَبْلُغْهُ أَحَدٌ فَرَآهُ قَدِ اصْفَرَّ لَوْنُهُ مِنَ السَّهَرِ وَرَمَصَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ البُكَاءِ وَدَبِرَتْ جَبْهَتُهُ وَانْخَرَمَ أَنْفُهُ مِنَ السُّجُودِ وَوَرُمَتْ سَاقَاهُ وَقَدَمَاهُ مِنَ القِيَامِ فِي الصَّلاةِ، فَقَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: فَلَمْ أَمْلِكْ حِينَ رَأَيْتُهُ بِتِلْكَ الحَالِ البُكَاءَ، فَبَكَيْتُ رَحْمَةً لَهُ. وَإِذَا هُوَ يُفَكِّرُ، فَالْتَفَتَ إِلَيَّ بَعْدَ هُنَيْهَةٍ مِنْ دُخُولِي فَقَالَ: يَا بُنَيَّ، أَعْطِنِي بَعْضَ تِلْكَ الصُّحُفِ الَّتِي فِيهَا عِبَادَةُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ. فَأَعْطَيْتُهُ، فَقَرَأَ فِيهَا شَيْئاً يَسِيراً ثُمَّ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ يَدِهِ تَضَجُّراً وَقَالَ: مَنْ يَقْوَى عَلَى عِبَادَةِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ؟

The pride of the community and its authority, its treasure and pillar, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man al-Mufid (R) reports in al-Irshad from Sa'id ibn Kulthum that Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (R) said, "By God, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A)never ate anything forbidden as long as he lived in the world, and never were two things wherein lay God's good pleasure presented to him without his choosing that which was more taxing of the two for his body, And never did the Messenger of Allah (S) face any hardship without calling out to 'Ali (A), out of his trust in him, and none out of this Ummah except him has possessed the capacity, endurance and strength of the .(Messenger of Allah (S

p: ٧٣٢

In his conduct, he would act like someone in trepidation whose face was between heaven and hell and who looked forward to the reward of heaven and was frightful of .the punishment of hell

Indeed, he set free in the way of God and for sake of deliverance from Fire a thousand slaves out of his own money, earned with the toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow. The food of his household consisted of oil, vinegar, and dates, and his dress was never made of anything but coarse cotton, and if his blessed sleeves were .too long he would ask for a scissors and cut them short

Among his descendants and family no one ever came closer to resembling him in his learning and dress than 'Ali' ibn al-Husayn (A). His son Abu Ja'far—Imam al-Baqir (A), once, entered upon him and saw that he had reached an unprecedented state in worship. His complexion had paled due to keeping awake at nights; his eyes were sore from weeping; his forehead and nose were bruised due to prolonged ".prostrations; and hiss feet and ankles were swollen as a result of standing in prayer

Abu Ja'far (A) said: 'When I saw him in this condition I could not stop myself from breaking into tears. So I wept out of compassion that I felt for him, while he was sunk in contemplation. Some time passed after I had entered. Then noticing me, he said to me, "My son, give me one of those

books which describes the worship of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A).” I gave it to him. He read a little from it and then set it aside in exasperation. Then he declared, “Who has the strength to worship like ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A)!”(١)

وَعَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: کَانَ عَلِیُّ بْنُ الحُسَیْنِ عَلَیْهِمَا السَّلامُ یُصَلِّی فِی الیَوْمِ وَاللَّیْلَهِ أَلْفَ رَکْعَهٍ، وَکَانَتِ الرِّیحُ تُمَیِّلُهُ مِثْلَ السُّنْبُلَهِ.

Imam al-Baqir (A) said, “Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) used to offer one thousand rak’ahs of salat in every day and night. The wind would sway him like an ear of corn.”(٢)

My dear! Give some thought to these noble traditions. See how Imam al-Baqir (A)who was an infallible Imam fell weeping on observing the austerities of the worship of his father and on observing his state in worship. Observe how Imam al-Sajjad (A)despite the severe care and total dedication that he exercised in worship, expressed his weakness on reading a little from the book -of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A). Of course, all are incapable of worshipping like the Master of Masters (Mawla al-Mawali) and the common lot are incapable of the worship offered by the Infallible Ones. However, when one is incapable of attaining to a high station he should not give up altogether.

We must understand that this worship of theirs was not—may God be our refuge—a feigned performance. Rather, the path is so perilous, and the way is so narrow, and the passes of death and Resurrection are so difficult that it impelled those who

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١- Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-’Irshad, ٢٥٥-٢٥۶.

٢- Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-’Irshad, ٢٥۶.

have the knowledge of the reality to implore and admit their weakness. This nonchalance of ours arises from the weakness of our faith and the insufficiency of .conviction, from our ignorance and nescience

O Lord! You are aware of the character of Your servants and know our deficiencies and shortcomings, our weakness and impotence. You immersed us in Your mercy even before our asking for it. Your bounties are given unasked and Your favors are prior to requests of help. Now we confess to our shortcomings and our ingratitude in the face of Your unlimited bounties. We confess that we deserve painful punishment and are worthy of being confined to Hell. We have no excuse and no means of seeking Your pardon except what You have said through the tongues of Your prophets, concerning Yourself and Your mercifulness, Your compassion, pity, grace and generosity. We know You through these attributes of Yours and to the extent of our capacity. How will You deal with this handful of dust? Will it be with anything except ?compassion and magnanimity

أَيْنَ رَحْمَتُکَ الوَاسِعَهُ؟ أيْنَ أيَادِيکَ الشَّامِلَهُ؟ أيْنَ فَضْلُکَ العَمِيمُ؟ أَيْنَ کَرَمُکَ يَا کَرِيمُ؟

Where is Your all-inclusive compassion? Where is Your all-inclusive help? Where is ?Your universal magnanimity? Where is Your generosity, O Generous One

Worship And Freedom From Need

It should be known that ghina (self-sufficiency, richness, independence, and being without need of others) is a virtue of the soul or, rather, a virtue of being qua being. Hence, ghina is an Essential Attribute of the Sacred Essence of God, Glorious

and Exalted. Wealth and riches do not bring spiritual self-sufficiency. Rather, it may be said that those who lack spiritual self-sufficiency are made more greedy and avaricious due to the possession of property, riches and wealth, and their need becomes greater. True richness is unattainable except through God, Glorious and Exalted, Who is Self-sufficient-by-Essence, and all other existents, from humble dust to the topmost heaven and from primal matter to the higher jabarut, all are 'poor' and .needy

Hence the more the heart's attention is turned to other-than-God and the more is one's inner self attentive to the cultivation of the mundane and the corporeal world .(mulk), the more one's poverty and need become day by day

The spiritual aspect of this poverty is quite obvious, because attachment and love is need by itself. The external aspect of this poverty, which reinforces spiritual poverty, also becomes stronger; for one who is not independent in managing his own affairs inevitably stands in need of others. Even if the rich and the wealthy should outwardly appear to be without need, a closer look will reveal that their need increases in proportion to the amount of their wealth. Hence, the wealthy are the poor in the garb .of rich and needy in the garb of self-sufficient

The more is the attention of the heart and its attachment to mundane matters and cultivation of the world, the more does it get covered with the dust of abasement and poverty and the greater become its need

and darkness of abasement. Conversely, if someone should turn his back upon attachment to the world and orient the heart toward absolute richness and self-sufficiency, convinced in the essential poverty of all beings, understanding that no existent possesses anything of itself and that there is no power, honor or authority except through God, and listens to the voice of the malakuti caller and the call from :the Unseen that

(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمْ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ.)

O mankind, you have the ones that have need of God; He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable, (۳۵:۱۵)

he would attain freedom from need of both the worlds and his heart would become so free from need that the kingdom of Solomon would have no worth in his eyes. If the keys of the earth's treasures be offered to him, he would be indifferent to that offer, as narrated in tradition that when Gabriel brought from God, the Exalted, the key to the world's treasures to the Seal of the Prophets (S)he declined them out of humility, considering his poverty to be his pride. The Commander of the Faithful (A) said to Ibn 'Abbas, "This world of yours has lesser worth in my eyes than this old shoe of mine which is full of patches." The Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A)says, "It is a matter of disdain for me to ask the world's Creator to do me a mundane favor, to say nothing of asking ".it of other creatures like myself

Out of the

common lot, Najm al-Din Kubra, after swearing some formidable oaths, declares: "If the world's wealth as well as the other world's Paradise with its houries and palaces be offered to me on condition that I should associate only with the rich and wealthy, and if the world's adversities and those of the Hereafter be offered to me together with association with the poor-given this choice I will select the company of the poor :and will not surrender myself to the disgrace of associating with the rich and

النّارُ خَيرٌ منَ العَارِ.

.The Fire is better than dishonor

Yes, they know well the nature of the darkness and rust formed in the heart as a result of attachment to worldly treasures and riches and due to the company and association with those who possess these. They know how these weaken the will and afflict the heart with need and poverty, making it inattentive to the Centre of absolute perfection. But when you surrender the heart to its Owner and this house to its Master, abstaining from making any dispensation in it, turning away from it all strangers, and refraining from handing it over to an usurper, the Master of the house will reveal Himself therein. The presence in it of the absolutely All-sufficient will bring absolute self-sufficiency, immersing the heart in the ocean of honor and contentment :and filling it with freedom from need

(وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ.)

(Yet honor belongs to God, arid to His Messenger and the faithful. (۶۳:۸

Then, the affairs of the

house are managed by its Master and one is not left to one's own devices. He takes care of all the matters of Isis servant, or, rather, He becomes his hearing, vision, and limbs, and this nearness is the outcome of the nawafil as mentioned in this tradition of :al-Kafi

الكَافِی: بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فِی حَدِيثٍ: وَإِنَّهُ لَيَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَیَّ بِالنَّافِلَهِ حَتَّی أُحِبُّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ کُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِی يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِی يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَلِسَانَهُ الَّذِی يَنْطِقُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِی يَبْطِشُ بِهَا.

In al-Kafi, (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that in a hadith qudsi God says, "...And verily he seeks nearness to Me through the .means of the nawafil, until I love him. And when I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears and the vision with which he beholds, and the tongue with which he speaks, and the hand (by which he grasps..."(١)

Thus, the servant's poverty is totally removed and he becomes free from the need of both the worlds. Of course, in this revelation of the Divine (within the heart), the fear of all the existents is removed from him, giving its place to the fear of God, the Exalted, Whose Greatness and Majesty fills the entire heart of the devotee, who no longer sees any greatness, majesty or efficiency in anything other than God, having :perceived in his heart the fact signified by this statement

لا مُؤَثِّرَ فِی الوُجُودِ إِلا الله.

.No one is effective in the realm of existence except God

There

.Usul al-Kafi, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr" "bab man adha al-muslimin" hadith no. ٨ -١

:is a reference to this point in the hadith under exposition, where it says

تَفَرَّغْ لِعِبَادَتِی أَمْلَأْ قَلْبَکَ غِنیً.

.Empty yourself for My worship so that I may fill your heart with ghina

This ‘emptying’ of the heart for the sake of worship may gradually lead one to the .higher degrees of heart’s concentration in worship

These are the effects, some of which have been mentioned. Should the heart turn away from attention to God and fail to achieve the detachment necessary for paying attention to Him, such a neglect would be the source of all forms of wretchedness, defects and diseases of the heart. If that happens, a darkness and obscurity will grip the heart on account of this neglect, and thick curtains through which the light of guidance cannot pass will become an obstruction between it and God, depriving it of Divine succor and making the heart totally absorbed in the world and the pursuit of corporeal pleasures. Then he will be enveloped by the walls of egoism and egotism. .The soul will become self-willed and its movements will become subject to its egoism

Thereupon, its essential baseness and its real poverty will become manifest; all its movements and pauses will lead it further away from God, and total failure and defeat will be its lot. The noble tradition refers to some of these consequences where it declares, ‘I will fill your heart with preoccupation with the world and I will not block ,the entry of poverty and need into it

'.and I will leave you to your own devices

A Last Point

It should be known that that which is meant by leaving a creature to its own devices does not mean delegation of its affairs to itself, for such a thing is impossible from the viewpoint of the mystical creed and the metaphysical doctrine, in addition to being contrary to the true religious doctrine. No existent can dissociate itself from the realm of Divine power and dispensation, and neither can it have (total) freedom to direct its .own affairs

When a creature turns away from God and becomes absorbed in the world, carnal nature begins to rule over it and it is dominated by egoism, and autistic, self-seeking and narcissistic tendencies direct his conduct. And this is what is meant by leaving it to its own devices. However, a servant whose heart is turned towards God and the higher malakut and is totally submerged in the Divine light, all its dispensations assume a godly character or, rather, at certain levels, his entire being becomes divine, as alluded to in the noble tradition of al-Kafi that refers to some of these stations while hinting at the nearness attained through supererogatory acts of worship. And God is All-knowing

Twenty-Eighth Hadith: Meeting God

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى ثِقَهِ الإسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ وَالحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ جَمِيعاً عَنِ القَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ عَبْدِالصَّمَدِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: أَصْلَحَكَ

اللهُ، مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللهِ أَحَبَّ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ لِقَاءَ اللهِ أَبْغَضَ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ: فَوَاللهِ إِنَّا لَنَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ. فَقَالَ: لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ تَذْهَبُ، إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ الْمُعَايَنَةِ إِذَا رَأَى مَا يُحِبُّ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ عَلَى اللهِ، وَاللهُ تَعَالَى يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَهُ وَهُوَ يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَ اللهِ حِينَئِذٍ. وَإِذَا رَأَى مَا يَكْرَهُ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ لِقَاءِ اللهِ، وَاللهُ يَبْغُضُ لِقَاءَهُ.

With my chain of transmission reaching up to the Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (M) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Muhammad ibn Khalid and al-Husayn ibn Sa'id, and both of them from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from 'Abd al-Samad ibn Bashir, from someone from among his companions, who reports from Abu 'Abd Allah (A)stating: I said to him (i.e., Imam al-Sadiq), "Aslahakallah! (May God set you right) (Is it true that) if anyone loves meeting God (liqa' Allah,) God too loves to meet him, and if someone should dislike the meeting with God, God too dislikes to meet him?" "Yes," replied the Imam. I said, "Indeed, by God, we detest death." The Imam said, "It is not as you imagine. That refers to the time of confrontation with death. At that moment when he sees (as lying in store for him) what he loves, there is nothing dearer to him than to go forth towards God. Coil, the Exalted, loves to meet him and he, too, loves to meet God. But if he sees (as lying (in store for him

what he detests, nothing is more abominable to him than meeting God, and God too (loathes to meet him."(1)

Exposition

Aslahakallah is a prayer of blessing, and in a benediction it is not necessary that the addressee be devoid of the blessing wished for him. Rather, such benedictive expressions are quite customary, even if what is invoked be already there. Hence, to pray for Imam al-Sadiq (A)wishing his welfare and betterment is not something contrary to common custom. Thus it is also correct to say 'May God forgive you' (ghafarallahu lak) and 'May God pardon you' ('afallahu 'ank) in regard to those sacred personages. Some (exegetes) have interpreted the noble verse:

(لِيَغْفِرَ لَکَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.)

...(that God may forgive thee thy former and thy latter sins. (۴۸:۲

in the same sense, stating that it is like saying to someone 'May God forgive you', and it is not necessary in such benedictive expressions to take into consideration that the addressee already possesses the blessing invoked in the prayer.

Although such an interpretation seems farfetched in relation to this noble verse-and we have already discussed it under one of the earlier traditions'(2) -it is basically right that mostly the actual possession of that which is invoked in such precative expressions is not taken into consideration.

لقاء (vowelized like لقی with fathah on lam, or kasrah) is the verbal noun (masdar) of رضی; so also are لقاءه، لقایه، لقیاً، لقیاناً، لقیانه and (all with kasrah of lam) لقیاً، لقی، لقیاناً، لقیانه (all

p: ۷۴۳

1- Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi; iii, ۱۳۴.

2- See the exposition of the twenty-first hadith.

with dammah on lam) are its verbal nouns and signify sight and vision. Later on in this exposition we will explain the meaning of liqa' Allah, to an extent that is appropriate .for these pages

is its trilateral root).) كَرُمَ، نَصِرَ، فَرِحَ like بَغُضَ And . إفعال pertains to the nominal form أبغض Bughd (hate) is the antonym of hubb بغض بغاضه فهو بغيض) (The lexicographers explain signify its stronger degrees. Briefly, love and hate are qualities بغضاء and بغضه (love) and .of the soul (sifat al-nafsaniyyah) and are opposite to each other

Their reality, as revealed by self-examination, is evident, like all other directly experienced and psychic qualities, whose essential reality is more evident than what any description of their meaning (i.e. of the words that stand for them) can divulge. However, an explanation of the signification of the ascription of 'love' and 'hate' to .God's Sacred Essence will be given later on, insha' Allah

As to the narrator's statement, "Indeed, we detest death," he said that because he imagined death to involve liqa' Allah, or because he thought that death was liqa' Allah itself. So he imagined revulsion for death to be aversion for liqa' Allah, and hence his question. The Imam answered him that the general dislike of death is not a criterion; rather, the criterion is the actual moment of death when one observes the signs of the .malakut and the other realms

this sentence does not لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ تَذْهَبُ :(As to the words of the Imam (A

have an exact equivalent expression in Persian. The import of this expression here and so ذهنم رفت or گمـانم رفت و گمان کردم may be conveyed by such Persian expressions as on, and the Arabic expression also implies a 'going' (dhahab) of the imagination (wahm). Arabic is replete with such expressions. Rather the common usage of 'dhahab' and expressions derived from it implies a dhahab of wahm, 'aqidah (belief) and the like, and the word 'madhhab' (going, trend, opinion, religion, creed, ideology, school of law or thought) denotes a similar meaning, which is based on metaphor, for .it is derived from external and outward dhahab

mu'ayanah is a verbal noun pertaining to عند المعاينه (As to the statement of the Imam (A (:The lexicographers explain its meaning as follows) مفاعله the form

عايَنتُ الشَّیءَ عَياناً إذا رَأيتُهُ.

The time of death is called mu'ayanah (viewing, examination, observation), because the dying person views the signs of the other world clearly. His hidden spiritual eye opens and a little of the reality of the malakut is revealed to him. Then he sees glimpses of his own attainments, works and (spiritual) condition. We shall explain in the course of a few sections that which needs exposition in the sacred tradition, .putting our reliance in God

Liqa' Allah And Its Character

Know that the number of verses and traditions which refer to liqa' Allah, either explicitly or implicitly, is quite large and their full details cannot be contained in this brief exposition. However, we shall briefly refer to some of them, and

anyone seeking further details should refer to the Risaleh-ye liqa' Allah of the marhum gnostic of God, al-Hajj Mirza Jawad Tabrizi (Q) wherein traditions concerning .this theme have been gathered to a certain extent

Know that some ulama and exegetes have totally blocked the path of liqa' Allah and denied (die possibility of) direct experience of the revelations (tajalliyat) of the Divine Names and Essence. Imagining that they were affirming the transcendence of the Sacred Essence as lying beyond all anthropomorphic and physical qualities, they have interpreted all the verses and traditions mentioning liqa' Allah as the encounter with .the Last Day and Judgment, its reward and punishment

Although such an interpretation of the general import of liqa' is not very far-fetched in relation to certain verses and traditions, it is certainly an implausible and far-fetched interpretation in relation to some reliable supplications and traditions mentioned in trustworthy books as well as in relation to some well-accepted (mashhur) traditions .which have been relied upon by great ulama

One should know that the intent of those who have kept open the path of liqa' Allah and the beatific vision (mushahadah) of Divine Glory and Beauty, is not that it is permissible to fathom the mystery of the Divine Essence or that it is possible to encompass in direct knowledge ('ilm huduri) and in immediate spiritual experience the .Essence, which encompasses absolutely everything

Rather, the impossibility of fathoming the Divine mystery through universal knowledge ('ilm al-kulli) and by the means of rational thought and the

impossibility of encompassing It in mystic experience (irfan al-shuhudi) and by the means of esoteric insight is an established matter, to which all people of the intellect (i.e. philosophers) as well as those of mystic knowledge and experience (arbab al-ma'arif wa qulub) are unanimous in agreeing. However, those who claim the :possibility of such a station state

Following the attainment of a complete and consummate state of God-fearing (taqwa), a total turning away of the heart from all the worlds and repudiation of both the realms of life (i.e. the pleasures of the world as well as that of the Hereafter), after trampling the heads of egoism and egocentrism under one's feet, and following complete attention and total absorption in God and the Names and Attributes of that Sacred Essence, after immersion in the love and passion for the Sacred Essence, and following austerities of the heart, a purity and burnish is attained by the wayfarer's .heart, which receives the revelations of the Names and the Attributes

Thereupon the thick veils that lie between the devotee and the Names and the Attributes are removed and he becomes annihilated in the Names and the Attributes, becoming "attached to the Mightiness of Sanctity and Glory" and attaining complete nearness (tadall'i) to the Essence. In this state, there is no veil between the .consecrated soul of the wayfarer and the Truth except the Names and the Attributes

For some of the wayfarers of the Path, the luminous veil of the Names and the Attributes

may also be removed, whereupon they attain to the Hidden tajalliyat of the Essence, beholding themselves attached and close to the Sacred Essence, and, in this vision, they perceive the sustaining encompassment of the Truth (ihateh-ye qayyumi-ye Haqq) and their own essential annihilation (fana' al-dhati). Then, he clearly views his own being, as well as that of all other existents, as a shadow of the Divine Being.

As-in accordance with metaphysical proof-there is no veil between God and the First Creature, which is non-material and free from all forms of matter and attachments (rather, according to metaphysical proofs there is no veil for non-material beings in general), so is die heart that in its expansive and encompassing character has been elevated to the plane of non-material beings. Rather, it walks on the heads of those beings and there is no veil for it, as mentioned in this sacred tradition reported in al-Kafi and al-Tawhid:

إنَّ رُوحَ المُؤمِنِ لأَشَدُّ اتِّصالاً بِروحِ اللهِ مِن اتِّصالِ الشَّمسِ بشُعاعِها.

Verily, the spirit of the possessor of faith is more firmly attached to the Spirit of Allah than the sun's ray is attached to it.(1)

In the Munajat Sha'baniyyah, which are accepted as authentic by the ulama and whose very contents bear witness to the authenticity of their origin in those sacred personages, i.e. the Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt (A), this is how they supplicate:

اِلَهی هَبْ لِی کَمالَ الانْقِطَاعِ إلَيْکَ وَأَنِرْ أَبْصارَ قُلُوبِنا بِضِيَاءِ نَظَرِهَا إلَيْکَ حَتَّى تَخْرِقَ أَبْصارُ القُلُوبِ حُجُبَ النُّورِ فَتَصِلَ إلَى مَعْدِنِ العَظَمَهِ وَتَصِيرَ

p: ۷۴۸

۱- Usul al-Kafi, ii, "Kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab ukhuwwat al-mu'minin", hadith no. ۴.

أَرْوَاحُنَا مُعَلَّقَهً بِعِزِّ قُدْسِکَ. إلَهِی وَاجْعَلْنِی مِمَّنْ نَادَیْتَهُ فَأَجَابَکَ وَلاحَظْتَهُ فَصُعِقَ بِجَلالِکَ فَنَاجَیْتَهُ سِرّاً وَعَمِلَ لَکَ جَهْراً.

My God, grant me the utmost absorption in Thee and illuminate the vision of our hearts with the light of Thy Vision, until the sight of the hearts can penetrate the curtains of light and reach the source of Greatness and until our spirits get anchored to the threshold of Thy Sanctity. My God, make me one of those whom Thou callest and who respond to Thee, whom Thou regardest and who swoon with awe before Thy Glory, and to whom Thou whisperest secretly and who act for Thy sake openly.(۱)

And while recounting the heavenly ascension (miraj) of the Noble Messenger (S) God declares in the Noble Divine Scripture:

(ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّی. فَکَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَیْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَی.)

(Then drew near and suspended hung, two bows' length away or nearer. (۵۳:۸-۹

This direct experience of extinction (fana') is not contrary to the impossibility of fathoming and encompassing (the Divine Essence), nor does it conflict with the verses and traditions that assert Divine transcendence. Rather, it supports and conforms them.

Now see if there is any need to take resort in such far-fetched and insipid interpretations. Can one interpret this statement of Amir al-Mu'minin (A) when he says:

فَهَبْنِی، یَا إلَهِی وَسَیِّدِی وَمَوْلایَ، صَبَرْتُ عَلَی عَذَابِکَ، فَکَیْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَی فِرَاقِکَ.

O my God, my Master and my Lord! Even if I were able to endure Thy chastisement, how shall I bear Thy separation?(۲)

and those lamentations and wailings of the awliya' as being

۱- Mafatih al-jinan, "al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah."

۲- Mafatih al-jinan, "Du'a' Kumayl."

for the sake of houris and palaces? Shall we explain the laments of separation of those who used to declare that “we don’t worship God for the fear of hell, nor for the desire of paradise, but we worship him as free men should purely because God is worthy of worship” as being on account of separation from paradise and its foods, ?drinks and pleasures

Alas! What a preposterous thing to say, and what a most unseemly interpretation! Is it possible to say that the revelations of Divine Beauty on the Night of the Ascent, in the meeting wherein no other creature was present and of whose secrets even Gabriel, the one entrusted with the Revelation, was kept out, were represented by Paradise and its raised-up mansions? That these constituted ‘the lights of Divine Majesty and Glory’ and the disclosure of God’s favors? Were the tajalliyat experienced by the prophets (A) as mentioned in reliable supplications, bounties of the order of foods, ?drinks, gardens and castles

Alas! We, wretches entrapped in the dark veils of corporeal nature and entangled in the chains of petty hopes and expectations, understand nothing except food, drink, sex and the like. And should we come across a man of vision and someone with a heart who attempts to lift the curtain from these veils, we consider it an error and .affront

As long as we remain imprisoned in the dark pit of the world of mulk, we would not be able to apprehend anything of the

gnostic teachings (ma'arif) and the experiences of those adept in them. So, my dear, don't compare the awliya' to yourself and don't imagine the hearts of the prophets and those of the people of the ma'arif to be like these dismal hearts of ours. Our .hearts are covered with the dusts of attachment to the world and its mundane lusts

The impurity resulting from immersion in lusts does not allow them to become the mirror of Divine revelations wherein the beauty of the Beloved is reflected. Of course, with this egoism, this self-seeking and narcissism of ours, we shouldn't be able to make out anything of the tajalliyat of God, the Most Exalted, and His Beauty and .Glory

Given this state of ours, we should be such ones as refute the words of the awliya' and the people of marifah, and even if we should refrain outwardly from denouncing them as false, we would still consider them false in our hearts. And should there be no way for negating their truth-as when one is convinced of the truth of the statements of the Messenger and the Infallible Imams (A)-we would open the door of ta'wil and interpretation and, in a word, block the door to the knowledge (marifah) of God. Thus, :(we interpret this (saying of 'Ali

مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إلاّ وَرَأَيْتُ اللهَ مَعَهُ وَقَبْلَهُ وَفِيهِ.

,I did not see a thing without beholding God with it, before it, and in it

as implying the vision of the effects (of God's omnipotence). We

explain these words of ‘Ali (A):

لَمْ أَعْبُدْ رَبّاً لَمْ أَرَهُ.

I did not worship a Lord that I did not see,[1]

as implying the knowledge of universals, similar in nature to our own knowledge. We interpret the verses mentioning liqa’ Allah as signifying the encounter with the Day of Judgment, and take the tradition of the Prophet (S):

لِى مَعَ اللهِ حَالَةٌ.

I have a state with God,

as signifying a tender feeling of the heart, and the words of the supplication:

وَارْزُقْنِى النَّظَرَ إلَى وَجْهِكَ الكَرِيمِ.

And bestow upon me the vision of Thy Noble Face,

and all the lamentations of the awliya’ and their wails of separation as arising from the pain of separation froth the houris of paradise and its fowl! And the reason behind all these interpretations is that we are not champions of this field; we understand nothing except bestial and bodily pleasures, and our nescience prompts us to repudiate all the ma arif.

This denial is the worst of all calamities, which locks upon us the door to all the higher teachings, keeps us from seeking, and make us remain satisfied at the level of bestial and beastly existence, depriving us of entry into the hidden realms and obstructing us from Divine lights. It keeps us, wretched ones that we are, totally deprived from experiencing the tajalliyat-even from faith in the reality of these spiritual states, a faith which by itself constitutes a degree of spiritual merit and which might have taken us somewhere.

We even evade the (theoretical) knowledge, which might have

۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-Tawhid, ۳۰۵.

served as the seed of (mystic) experience, and completely close our eyes and ears, stuffing the cotton of neglect into our ears lest a word of truth should enter them. If we hear any of the truths from the mouth of a passionate ‘arif or a heart-broken wayfarer, or a theosopher (Hakim al-muta’allih), immediately we make him the target of all kinds of curses and insults, calling him an apostate and a profligate, refraining not from any kind of slander and backbiting in regard to him, because our ears cannot .bear to hear his words and self-love prevents us from realizing our own inadequacies

Alas, we bequeath a book as waqf, binding its user with the condition that he should curse, hundred times a day, the mathum Mullah Muhsin Fayd (Kashani)! We call Sadr al-Muta’allihin (Mullah Sadra), who is the foremost of the adherents of tawhid, a heretic (zindiq) and do not stop at any insult in regard to him. There is no trace of any inclination towards Sufism in all of his books. Rather, he has written a book entitled Kasr asnam al jahiliyyah fi al-radd ‘ala al-Sufiyyah (“Demolition of the idols of the Jahiliyyah, on the refutation of the Sufis”); yet we call him “a Sufi through and ”.through

We leave those who are of a known character and have been cursed by the tongues of God and His Messenger (S) and call down curses upon those who loudly proclaim their faith in God, in the Messenger and

the Imams of guidance (A). I know that these curses and insults do not harm their station in the least, or, rather, perhaps, increase their fair reward with God and cause the elevation of their degrees. But these things are injurious for ourselves and may .result in depriving us of Divine assistance and bring about our failure

Our shaykh, an accomplished ‘arif that he was (i.e. Shahabadi), may my soul be his ransom, used to say: “Never call down curses (la’n) on anybody, though he be a kafir concerning whom you do not know how he made the transit from this world to the next, and unless an infallible wali informs you concerning his condition after death. For it is possible that he may have attained faith before the time of death. Hence let your ”.curse be of a general character

Here is one who has such a sacred spirit that he would not permit anyone who has died an apparent unbeliever to be insulted, for the probability that he might have acquired faith at the time of death, and there are the like of us! And only to God do I that the preacher of a certain city, though a man of(وإلى الله المشتكى) take my complaint learning and merit, used to say in the presence of scholars and the learned that so and so “used to read the Qur’an despite being a metaphysician.” It is like saying, “So !”and so believed in God and Resurrection despite being a prophet

I, too, do not put much of a store by mere knowledge, and a learning that does not bring faith with it is the greatest of veils. However, one has to approach a veil in order to tear it into shreds.

The sciences are seeds of (spiritual) experience. Although it is possible, at times, that one may attain to higher spiritual stations without encountering the veils of learned jargon and the sciences, but such a thing is unusual, contrary to the wont of natural law and happens only rarely. Hence, the way to God-seeking is that one should at the outset devote his time to the remembrance of God and acquire the knowledge of God and the Names and Attributes of that Sacred Essence, the usual way from the adept (mashayikh) of that science.

Then, by the means of theoretical and practical exercises and austerities, he should open his heart to the ma'arif, and this will undoubtedly yield results. If he is not one of those familiar with the learned jargon, he can obtain results through the remembrance of the Beloved and by preoccupying his heart and mind with that Sacred Essence.

Of certain, this preoccupation of the heart and inward attention will become the means of his guidance, and God, the Exalted, will assist him. The concealing curtains will rise from before his eyes and he will somewhat retreat, from those vulgar forms of skepticism. And, perhaps, he may find his way to the ma'arif with the special grace of

God Almighty. Indeed, He is the Lord of bounties (وإلى الله المشتكى).

Death–The Moment Of Truth

This sacred tradition indicates that at the time of confronting death some of his stations and conditions become revealed to man. This matter is in conformity with a kind of metaphysical proof and in agreement with the experience of mystics as well as with traditions and other reports. As long as man is preoccupied with the cultivation of this mundane realm and the face of his heart is turned towards this habitat and the intoxicant of carnal nature has made him unconscious and the opiates of lust and power stupefy him, he remains totally in the dark concerning the (malakuti) forms of his conduct and morals and blind to their effects in the malakut of the heart.

But when the reelings of death and its pressures seize him, he attains a measure of detachment from this world. And if he is a man of faith and of conviction whose heart has been turned towards these realms, at the last moments his heart naturally turns towards that world and the spiritual inductors and the angels of God assigned over it (i.e. the heart) also induct him towards that world. After this induction and that detachment, a part of the world of barzakh is revealed to him and a window to the world of the Hidden is opened upon him. Then his own state and station is disclosed to him to some extent, as is narrated from Amir al-Mu'minin (A) that

:he said

حَرَامٌ عَلى نَفسٍ أنْ تخرُجَ مِن الدّنيَا حتَّى تعْلَمَ أنَّه مِن أهْلِ الجَنَّه هَیَ أمْ مِن أهْلِ النّارِ.

It is prohibited that any soul should leave this world without, knowing whether it (belongs to the people of paradise or the people of hell?(١)

In this context, there is a sacred tradition which we will mention in its entirety despite its length because it contains good news for the adherents of the wilayah of the Master of the Masters (Mawla al-mawali, i.e. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib) and those holding on to the skirts of the magnanimity of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A). This hadith has been :narrated by the venerable Fayd Kashani in his book Ilm al-yaqin

قَالَ: وَفِی کِتَابِ الحُسَیْنِ بْنِ سَعِیدٍ الأَهْوَازِیِّ عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ: مِنْکُمْ وَاللهِ یُقْبَلُ وَلَکُمْ وَاللهِ یُغْفَرُ. إنَّهُ لَیْسَ بَیْنَ أَحَدِکُمْ وَبَیْنَ أنْ یَغْتَبِطَ وَیَرَی السُّرُورَ وَقُرَّهَ العَیْنِ إلاّ أنْ تَبْلُغَ نَفْسُهُ هَا هُنَا – وَأَوْمَأَ بِیَدِهِ إلَی حَلْقِهِ – ثُمَّ قَالَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: إنَّهُ إذَا کَانَ ذَلِکَ وَاحْتَضَرَ حَضَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلِیٌّ وَالأَئِمَّهُ وَجِبْرَئِیلُ وَمِیکَائِیلُ وَمَلَکُ المَوْتِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ. فَیَدْنُو مِنْهُ جِبْرَئِیلُ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فَیَقُولُ لِرَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: إنَّ هَذَا کَانَ یُحِبُّکُمْ أَهْلَ البَیْتِ فَأَحِبَّهُ. فَیَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: یَا جِبْرَئِیلُ، إنَّ هَذَا کَانَ یُحِبُّ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَیْتِهِ فَأَحِبَّهُ. فَیَقُولُ جِبْرَئِیلُ: یَا مَلَکَ المَوْتِ، إنَّ هَذَا کَانَ یُحِبُّ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَآلَ رَسُولِهِ فَأَحِبَّهُ وَارْفِقْ بِهِ. فَیَدْنُو مِنْهُ مَلَکُ المَوْتِ فَیَقُولُ لَهُ: یَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، أَخَذْتَ فِکَاکَ رَقَبَتِکَ؟

.Fayd al-Kashani, Ilm al yaqin, ii, ٨٥٣ -١

أَخَذْتَ أَمَانَ بَرَائَتِکَ؟ تَمَسَّکْتَ بِالعِصْمَهِ الکَبْرَی فِی الحَیَاهِ الدُّنْیا؟ قَالَ: فَیُوَفِّقُهُ (فَیَرْفَعُهُ) اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَیَقُولُ: نَعَمْ. فَیَقُولُ (لَهُ): وَمَا ذَاکَ؟ فَیَقُولُ: وَلایَهُ عَلِیِّ بْنِ أَبِی طَالِبٍ. فَیَقُولُ: صَدَقْتَ! أَمَّا الَّذِی کُنْتَ تَحْذَرُهُ فَقَدْ آمَنَکَ اللهُ مِنْهُ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِی کُنْتَ تَرجُو فَقَدْ أَدْرَکْتَهُ. أَبْشِرْ بِالسَّلَفِ الصَّالِحِ مُرَافَقَهَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعِلِیٍّ وَالأَئِمَّهَ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلامُ. ثُمَّ یَسِلُّ نَفْسَهُ سَلاًّ رَفِیقاً، ثُمَّ یَنْزِلُ بِکَفَنِهِ مِنَ الجَنَّهِ وَحَنُوطِهِ حَنُوطٍ کَالمِسْکِ الأَذْفَرِ، فَیُکَفَّنُ بِذَلِکَ الکَفَنِ وَیُحَنَّطُ بِذَلِکَ الحَنُوطِ، ثُمَّ یُکْسَی حُلَّهً صَفْرَاءَ مِنْ حُلَلِ الجَنَّهِ. فَإِذَا وُضِعَ فِی قَبْرِهِ فَتَحَ اللهُ لَهُ بَاباً مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الجَنَّهِ یَدْخُلُ عَلَیْهِ مِنْ رَوْحِهَا وَرَیْحَانِهَا. ثُمَّ یُقَالُ لَهُ: نَمْ نَوْمَهَ العَرُوسِ عَلَی فِرَاشِهَا، أَبْشِرْ بِرَوْحٍ وَرَیْحَانٍ وَجَنَّهِ نَعِیمٍ وَرَبٍّ غَیْرِ غَضْبَانَ.

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الکَافِرَ الوَفَاهُ حَضَرَهُ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلِیٌّ وَالأَئِمَّهُ وَجِبْرَئِیلُ وَمِیکَائِیلُ وَمَلَکُ المَوْتِ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلامُ. فَیَدْنُو مِنْهُ جِبْرَئِیلُ فَیَقُولُ: یَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، إِنَّ هَذَا کَانَ مُبْغِضاً لَکُمْ أَهْلَ البَیْتِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ. فَیَقُولُ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: یَا جِبْرَئِیلُ، إِنَّ هَذَا کَانَ یُبْغِضُ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَیْتِ رَسُولِهِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ. وَیَقُولُ جِبْرَئِیلُ: یَا مَلَکَ المَوْتِ، إِنَّ هَذَا کَانَ یُبْغِضُ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَهْلَ بَیْتِ رَسُولِهِ فَأَبْغِضْهُ وَاعْنُفْ عَلَیْهِ. فَیَدْنُو مِنْهُ مَلَکُ المَوْتِ فَیَقُولُ: یَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، أَخَذْتَ فِکَاکَ رَقَبَتِکَ؟ أَخَذْتَ أَمَانَ بَرَائَتِکَ؟ تَمَسَّکْتَ بِالعِصْمَهِ الکُبْرَی فِی الحَیَاهِ الدُّنْیا؟ فَیَقُولُ: لا. فَیَقُولُ: أَبْشِرْ یَا عَدُوَّ اللهِ بِسَخَطِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَعَذَابِهِ وَالنَّارِ. أَمَّا الَّذِی کُنْتَ تَرْجُو فَقَدْ فَاتَکَ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِی کُنْتَ تَحْذَرُ فَقَدْ نَزَلَ بِکَ. ثُمَّ یَسِلُّ نَفْسَهُ سَلّاً عَنِیفاً، ثُمَّ یُوکِلُ بِرُوحِهِ ثَلاثَمِائَهِ شَیْطَانٍ یَبْزُقُونَ فِی وَجْهِهِ، وَیَتَأَذَّی بِرِیحِهِ. فَإِذَا وُضِعَ

فِی قَبْرِهِ فُتِحَ لَهُ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ النَّارِ فَیَدْخُلُ عَلَیْهِ مِنْ قَیْحِ رِیحِهَا وَلَهَبِهَا.

It is narrated in the Book of al-Husayn ibn Said al-Ahwazi, from 'Abbad ibn Marwan that he said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say, "By God, your works will be accepted and your sins will be forgiven. There is nothing that intervenes between anyone of you and his becoming the object of envy and his seeing the delight and experiencing the comfort of your eyes except the moment when your soul reaches this point." And saying this, he pointed with his hand to his throat. Then he (A) said, "And when that moment arrives, at the time of death, the Messenger of Allah (S) 'Ali, the Imams, Gabriel, Michael and the Angel of Death (A) become present before him. Then Gabriel(۱) (A) approaches him and says to the Messenger of Allah (S), 'This one used to love you, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him dear.' Whereupon the Messenger of Allah (S) says, 'O Gabriel, indeed this one used to love God, His Messenger and his Household, and I (too) hold him dear.' Then Gabriel says (to the Angel of Death): 'O Angel of Death, this one used to love Allah, His Messenger and the Household of the Messenger, so hold him dear and be gentle to him.'

Then the Angel of Death (A) says (to the dying person), 'O creature of God, have you secured your release and your security and amnesty? Did you hold on to the

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۱- This sentence of the tradition is narrated in the following form in its version of Furu' al-Kafi, iii, p. ۱۳۱: "Then 'Ali (A)approaches him and says: "O Messenger of Allah, this one used to love us, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him dear," and the Messenger of Allah (S)says: O Gabriel... "Later in this narration-which is more reliable and precise-it is 'Ali who says to the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, this one used to hate us, Ahl al-Bayt, so hold him in resentment." (Trans.)

great handhold in the life of the world, whereupon, with God’s succor, he declares, “Yes.’ ‘What is it?’ the Angel of Death asks him. ‘(It is) the wilayah of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A),’ he replies. The Angel says, ‘You have told the truth. God has granted you security from what you were frightened of and you have attained what you used to hope for. Receive the good news of the companionship of the righteous predecessors and of ’.(the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Imams of his progeny (A

Then he gently withdraws his soul and brings down his shroud from paradise, and his balm (hunut) is that of fragrant musk. Then he wraps him in that shroud and embalms him with that hunut and clothes him in a yellow dress from among the garments of paradise. Then, when he is laid in his grave, a door from among the doors of paradise is opened for him and its freshness and fragrance enters upon him. Then he is told, ‘Sleep, like the sleep of a bride on her bed. Receive the glad news of the freshness ’.and fragrance of the Garden of bounties and of an unwrathful Lord

Imam al-Sadiq (A) continued) And when an unbeliever encounters the moment of) death, the Messenger of Allah (S) ‘Ali, the Imams, Gabriel, Michael and the Angel of Death (A) become present before him. Then Gabriel approaches him and says, ‘O ,Messenger of Allah, verily this one used to detest you, Ahl al-Bayt

so hold him in resentment.' Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (S) says, 'O Gabriel, indeed this one used to hate God, His Messenger and the Messenger's Household, so you too be resentful towards him.' Thereat Gabriel declares, 'O Angel of Death, indeed this one used to hate God, His Messenger, and the Household of His Messenger (A) so you too be resentful of him and be harsh towards him.'

Then the Angel of Death approaches the dying person and says, 'O creature of God, did you secure your release and your security and amnesty? Did you hold on to the great handhold in the life of the world?' He answers, 'No.' Whereupon the Angel of Death tells him, 'O enemy of God! Receive the tiding of God's wrath and of His punishment and fire. You have lost what you hoped for and that which you used to be afraid of has descended upon you.' Then the Angel draws his soul violently and hands it over to three hundred devils who throw their spittle on his face and he is tormented with its stench. And when he is laid in his grave, a door from among the doors of hell is opened for him and its blaze and flames enter upon him."(۱)

It should be known that the barzakh of everyone is representative of his condition on the Day of Resurrection and that the world of barzakh is an intermediate world between this world and the world of Resurrection, where there is

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۱- 'Ilm al-yaqin, ii, pp. ۸۵۴, ۸۵۶.

a window opening towards paradise or hell, as mentioned in this noble tradition. The :famous prophetic tradition

It should be known that the barzakh of everyone is representative of his condition on the Day of Resurrection and that the world of barzakh is an intermediate world between this world and the world of Resurrection, where there is a window opening towards paradise or hell, as mentioned in this noble tradition. The famous prophetic :tradition

القَبْرُ إمَّا رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الجِنَانِ أَوْ حُفْرَةٌ مِنْ حُفَرِ النِّيرَانِ.

The grave is either a garden from among the gardens of paradise or a pit from among (the pits of the Fire,(۱

refers to the same matter. Hence, at the time of death and confrontation with it, man observes the effects and forms of his works and hears the news of paradise or hell from the Angel of Death. And when these things become revealed to him, he also observes the effects produced by his works and deeds in his heart, such as luminosity and expansiveness and openness of the breast, or their opposites such as darkness and constriction of the breast and its narrowness. Then, when confronted with barzakh, the heart becomes prepared to experience the subtle breezes of Divine .Grace and Beauty in it

Therein emerge the signs of the tajalliyat of Divine Grace and Beauty if he is a man of faith and felicity. Then the desire for liqa' Allah emerges in his heart and the fire of yearning for the Beloved's Beauty is lit in

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۱- Sunan al-Tirmidhi, iv, ۶۴۰, "Kitab sifat al-Qiyamah"; al-Jami' al-saghir, i, ۶۳.

it, if he had partaken of virtuous conduct, love and Divine passion, and none except .God knows what delights and beneficences lie in this tajalli and desire

If he had been one of the faithful and the righteous, he will be bestowed of the beneficence of God, the Exalted, in proportion to his faith and good works and he will get an immediate glimpse of it at the time of death. ‘Thereupon, the eagerness for death and encounter with Divine beneficence arise in him and he leaves this world with delight and ecstasy and in relief and freshness. The corporeal eyes and the earthly organs of taste do not have the strength to bear the pleasures of this ecstasy .and delight

But if he should be one of the wretched, an infidel, an unbeliever or a hypocrite, and perpetrator of ugly and evil deeds, he will, in accordance with the measure of his evil share and misconduct in the world, discover the effects of Divine Wrath and Might and see the abode of die wretched. Such terror and convulsions will seize him that nothing will be more hateful for him than the revelations of Divine Glory and Might. As a result of this hate and hostility, he will experience such an affliction, anguish, darkness and pain that none except God’s Sacred Essence can know the extent of its .intensity

This is for persons who have in this world repudiated the truth and been hypocrites and enemies of God and His awliya’. A

representative part of the hell becomes revealed also to the sinners and those guilty of major sins in proportion to the evil character of their misconduct, and in this state there is nothing more loathsome for them than to leave this world. And so they are transferred from it violently and harshly, with hardship and pain, and such a regret .grips their hearts that it knows no measure

This description shows that at the time of death man beholds that which had been in him and of which he was unaware. At that time the tips of the concealed part of his being become visible to him. The life of the world was a concealing curtain that hid our .defects and was a veil for the people of the ma'arif

Now that this curtain has been lifted and this veil has been removed, man observes a representative part of that which lay in him and that which he himself had prepared. In the other realms, man will not face any punishment or chastisement except on account of that which he earns in this world. He will have a direct vision of the (malakuti) forms of the righteous works and virtuous conduct that he had performed and the right convictions that he had held in this world, together with the gifts that God will bestow upon him out of His own favor and munificence. Under the noble :verse

(فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

And whoso doth good

(an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it. (۹۹:۷-۸

the following statement (of Ibn Mas'ud) is quoted in Tafsir al-Safi from Majma'al-(bayan:(۱)

هِیَ أَحْکَمُ آیَةٍ فِی القُرْآنِ، وَکَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ یُسَمِّیهَا الجَامِعَةَ.

It is the 'firmest' of the verses of the Qur'an, and the Messenger of Allah (S) -used to ".call it "al-jami'ah

Hence we should know that if we cultivate the love of God, the Exalted, and His awliya' in this world and put on the collar of obedience to that Sacred Essence around our necks and receive the burnish of Divine light in our hearts, at the time of death this .inward reality will be revealed to us in its beautiful (malakuti) form

Contrarily, if our hearts take on a mundane aspect and turn away from God, the seed of the enmity of God and the awliya' may come to be gradually sown in them. Then, at the sight of death, this enmity will reveal its intensity and divulge its terrible and .strange qualities, as you have seen

Hence one of the most important things for man is to take care to cultivate a Divine state in the heart and orient its face toward God, His awliya', and the abode of His favor. This can be attained by contemplating the bounties and favors of the Sacred Essence and devoting oneself to His obedience and worship. But one should not rely .upon oneself and one's works

At all times, especially in moments

.Al-Tabrisi, Majma 'al-bayan (Qumm ۱۴۰۳), v, ۵۲۷ -۱

of solitude, one must tearfully and humbly implore God to put His love in his heart and to illuminate his heart with the light of His knowledge and love, purging it of the love of .the world and of everything other than Him

Of course, this prayer is a substanceless and verbal exercise in the beginning, for it is very difficult to desire the removal of the world's love from one's heart when it is full of intense love for it. But after a period of contemplation, perseverance, and making the heart understand the fair results of the love of God and the evil results of the love .of the world, it is hoped that it will be realized, God willing

The Significance Of 'Love' And 'Hate' When Ascribed To God

Know that love, hate and the like, which in the language of the Qur'an and noble traditions have been ascribed to God-exalted is His Glory-are not to be taken in their ordinary sense. For such qualities signify psychic affections (infi'al al-nafsani), and God, the Exalted, is above and free of them. Since an elaborate discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this brief exposition, we will confine ourselves to a passing .reference

It should be known that there are in man qualities and states which on descent from the Hidden and non-material realms and on reaching the realm of corporeal nature-which is the realm of differentiation (farq), or rather that of differentiation within differentiation (farq al-farq)-assume a form which is different from that of the Hidden immaterial forms in

its effects and properties. Thus, the Platonists consider all material existents to be manifestations of Hidden spirits and to be reflections of celestial realities and analogies of the Platonic Ideas. They hold that the essential archetypes of the accidents and qualities, which have a non-substantial existence in this world, exist by .(themselves in that world (as independent substances

On this basis, we may say that the archetypes of these qualities and states, which in the corporeal world are accompanied with an affective and variable character, have an ideal form free of all inadequacies in the Hidden immaterial realms, especially in the world of Divine Names and the station of Unity. The meanings of the terms when referred to the immaterial realm, or the Divine plane, is different from those in this .world

For instance, should the tajalliyat of Beneficence (rahmaniyyah), Mercy (rahimiyyah), which are also called tajalliyat of Beauty (jamal), Gentleness (lutf), Love (hubb) and Intimacy (uns), be manifested in this world, they would take the form of love, mercy and gentleness that are accompanied by affection (infi'al), and this is due to the extremely narrow character of this world. It is mentioned in a hadith that out of hundred portions of Divine Mercy (rahmah) only one portion has been sent down in this world that comprises all the manifestations of compassion that find actualization in this world, such as the compassion between children and parents and the like. Similarly, the tajalliyat of Divine Compulsion (qahriyyah) and Mastership (malikiyyah), which

belong to the tajalliyat of Glory (jalal), are manifested in this world in the form of hatred (bughd) and rage (ghadhab).

To sum up, the inward aspect of love, hatred, and anger is Divine Compassion and Omnipotence and the tajalliyat of Beauty and Glory, which exist by themselves and in which change, affection, and multiplicity do not find any way. Thus the loves and antipathies that exist in this world are manifestations of Divine Compassion and Omnipotence, and since a manifestation (mazhar) depends on that which it manifests (zahir) and since the zahir is revealed in the mazhar, it is not improper to apply the same terms to the two of them. On this basis, the hatred of God, the Exalted, towards a creature is manifestation of Omnipotence and Vengeance, and His love manifestation of Compassion and Munificence. And God is the All-knowing.

Twenty-Ninth Hadith: The Prophet's Counsel To 'Ali

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى أَفْضَلِ الْمُحَدِّثِينَ وَأَقْدَمِهِمْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ النُّعْمَانِ، عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: كَانَ فِى وَصِيَّةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِعَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أنْ قَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ، أُوصِيكَ فِى نَفْسِكَ بِخِصَالٍ فَاحْفَظْهَا عَنِّى. ثُمَّ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنْهُ، أَمَّا الأُولَى فَالصِّدْقُ، وَلا تَخْرُجَنَّ مِنْ فِيكَ كِذْبَةٌ أَبَداً. وَالثَّانِيَهُ الوَرَعُ، وَلا تَجْتَرِئْ عَلَى خِيَانَهٍ أَبَداً. وَالثَّالِثَهُ الخَوْفُ مِنَ اللهِ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ. وَالرَّابِعَهُ كَثْرَةُ البُكَاءِ مِنْ خَشْيَهِ اللهِ يُبْنَى لَكَ بِكُلِّ دَمْعَهٍ أَلْفُ بَيْتٍ فِى الجَنَّهِ. وَالخَامِسَهُ بَذْلُكَ مَالَكَ وَدَمَكَ دُونَ دِينِكَ. وَالسَّادِسَهُ

الأَخْذُ بِسُنَّتِی فِی صَلاتِی وَصَوْمِی وَصَدَقَتِی. أَمَّا الصَّلاةُ فَالخَمْسُونَ رَكْعَةً، وَأَمَّا الصِّیَامُ فَثَلاثَةُ أَیَّامٍ فِی الشَّهْرِ؛ الخَمِیسُ فِی أَوَّلِهِ وَالأَرْبُعَاءُ فِی وَسَطِهِ وَالخَمِیسُ فِی آخِرِهِ، وَأَمَّا الصَّدَقَةُ فَجُهْدُكَ حَتَّی تَقُولَ: قَدْ أَسْرَفْتُ، وَلَمْ تُسْرِفْ. وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ اللَّیْلِ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ اللَّیْلِ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ اللَّیْلِ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ الزَّوَالِ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ الزَّوَالِ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِصَلاةِ الزَّوَالِ. وَعَلَیْكَ بِتِلاوَةِ القُرْآنِ عَلَی كُلِّ حَالٍ، وَعَلَیْكَ بِرَفْعِ یَدَیْكَ فِی صَلاتِكَ وَتَقْلِیبِهِمَا. وَعَلَیْكَ بِالسِّوَاكِ عِنْدَ كُلِّ وُضُوءٍ. وَعَلَیْكَ بِمَحَاسِنِ الأَخْلاقِ فَارْكَبْهَا، وَمَسَاوِئَ الأَخْلاقِ فَاجْتَنِبْهَا. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَلا تَلُومَنَّ إِلاّ نَفْسَكَ.

With my continuous chain of transmission reaching up to the best of the traditionists and the foremost of them, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from Mu'awiyah ibn 'Ammar, who says, "I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say: In a counsel that the Prophet (S) gave to 'Ali (A), he said, "O 'Ali, I exhort you concerning certain characteristics (khisal) which you must preserve in yourself (as a trust) from me."

Then he prayed, "O God, help him." (Then he continued) "As to the first of them, it is truthfulness: never should a falsehood come out of your mouth. The second is piety (wara'), and never venture upon a treachery. The third is to fear God-sublime is His remembrance-as if you see Him. The fourth is to weep a lot out of the fear of God, the Exalted, and a thousand mansions shall be built for you in the Garden for every tear. The fifth

is to offer your property and your blood for the sake of your religion. The sixth is to follow my sunnah in respect of my salat, my fasting, and my charity (sadaqah). As to the salat, it consists of fifty rak'ahs. As to the fasts, they are to be kept on three days in a month: on the first Thursday, on the Wednesday at its middle, and on the last Thursday. As to the charity, that consists of the utmost that you can give, so much so that you say to yourself, 'I have been immoderate,' whereas you will not have been .immoderate

Commit yourself to the nightly prayer (salat al-layl)! Commit yourself to the nightly"" prayer! Commit yourself to the nightly prayer! Stick to the (supererogatory) noon prayer! Stick to the noon prayer! Stick to the noon prayer! Accustom yourself to reciting the Qur'an at all times. Make it your practice to raise your hands during prayer and to turn them. Take care to brush your teeth every time that you perform wudu." Commit yourself to ethical virtues, practice them, and refrain from moral vices, and if (you don't, don't blame anyone except yourself."(١)

Khisal is the plural of khaslah, meaning khui (i.e. trait, characteristic, disposition) as mentioned in the Surah. Accordingly, its usage to denote the generality of dispositions as well as acts, as in this noble tradition and other places, is a figurative one. Or, perhaps, khaslah has a wider meaning than trait, in which case this kind

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.Al-Kulayni, Rawdat al-Kafi , p. ٧٩, hadith no. ٣٣ -١

.of usage will be a literal one

As to the word al-wara' (with fathah on the ra'), which occurs in the narration of the Imam (A) that and ri'ah are verbal nouns of wari'a and yari'u (with kasrah on ra' in both the cases) meaning God-fearing (taqwa) or intensity of God-fearing and piety. I restrained it], for wara' is, in] كففته meaning ورعته توريعاً Probably it is derived from reality, restraining of the soul and making it refrain from transgressing the limits of .the Shari'ah and reason

Or, it might have been derived from warra'a in the sense of radda (meaning i.e. 'I turned back (radadtuhu) the camel وَرَّعتُ الإبِلَ عنِ الماءِ dissuasion). Thus, it is said from water. That is because, in wara', one dissuades the soul from what it covets and .seeks to indulge in

and means temerity, إفتعال it pertains to the verbal form لا- تجترئ (As to his words (A daring, and boldness of action in matters. Al-Sihah, quoting Abu Zayd, states الجرأه مثال. الجرأه: الشجاعه. Also, it is mentioned in al-Sihah that: الجرئ: المقدام.

with dammah or fathah on الجهد (in the statement of the Imam (A فَجُهدُكَ As to the word when one جهد دابته وأجهدها It is said .(الطاقه والمشقه) the jim, it means strength and hardship makes one's mount run with all its power. Jahd is also used in the sense of effort and .exertion and this meaning seems [more] more appropriate for this tradition

is عليك here ,عَلَيكَ بِصَلاهِ اللَّيلِ :(As to his statement (A

an ism al-fi'l (verbal noun) which is used in the sense of a transitive verb or as its substitute. عليكم أنفسكم means ألزموا أنفسكم (i.e. 'Look after your own souls')(۱) Accordingly, this ba' (in بصلاه) is for the sake of stress and emphasis and not for making the verb transitive.

In the Majma' al-bahrayn it is stated that if the ba' be transitive it gives the sense of استمسک (i.e. stick to). This kind of expression does not exist in Persian, and in Arabic it is used for intensive emphasis upon a certain matter. Probably, a close Persian expression for it would be بچسب به فلان کار. However, its translation as something like بر تو بـاد بـه فلان does not accord with common usage. God willing, we will expound the relevant themes of the tradition in the course of a preface and several sections.

Preface

In this noble tradition, there are several aspects which reveal that these exhortations made by the Noble Messenger (S) to the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A), were very important in his blessed eyes. One of them is that these were addressed to the Commander of the Faithful (A) though that master stood above any possibility of negligence in regard to the laws of the Shari'ah and Divine commandments.

However, since the matter was itself of supreme significance in the blessed eyes of the Noble Messenger of Allah (S) he did not refrain from exhorting him, and it is quite usual to find him exhorting

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۱- Al-Qur'an, Surat al-Ma'idah: ۱۰۵.

someone concerning a matter that he considers as important and is concerned about, .though he may know that that person will carry it out without fail

As to the possibility that this counsel given to that holy personage was really aimed at others, being of the kind referred to in the proverb إياكِ أعنى واسمعى يا جارةُ) i.e. 'I tell you in order that the neighbor may hear'), such a possibility is remote. That is because the very context of the tradition bears witness that it was addressed to him and aimed independently at that holy personage, as indicated by the words فى نفسك ((in yourself)) and the order to cherish and safeguard them, as yell as the invocation for Divine .assistance

These kind of exhortations were customary amongst the Ahl al-Bayt and it was usual for the Infallible Imams (A) to make them to one another. The very context of every one of these exhortations clearly shows that they were addressed by those holy personages to one another. Hence, in one of these counsels the Commander of the Faithful (A)says to Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (A): "This is my counsel to the two of you and the other members of my household, as well as anyone whom this letter of mine should reach..."'(١)

It is clear that the Hasanayn (A) were included in this counsel and these exhortations reveal the supreme importance of the matter and the intensity of the love that those .holy personages had for one another

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١- Nahj al-balaghah, ed. Fayd al-Islam, Kutub, no. ۴٧.

In fine, the very fact that the Commander of the Faithful (A) should be the addressee .of these exhortations reveals the great importance of the matter

Another point is that although it was addressed to Hadrat Amir (i.e. Imam 'Ali), who would never have done anything against the Messenger's exhortations or treated them with laxity or negligence, the Prophet considered it essential to stress the .matter with such a great force

Another point is that after saying "I exhort you," he added, "you must safeguard them as a trust from me" in order to bring to his attention the importance of these exhortations. Thereafter, on account of his desire that Hadrat Amir should fulfill these important duties, he supplicated saying, "O God, help him." In addition, there are other scattered points of stress in a number of the sentences, as indicated by the nun of emphasis (as in لاـ يخرجـن), the use of repetition, and so on, which need not be .mentioned. All this shows the importance of these matters

Of course, it is obvious that the Prophet's sacred personage had no imaginable self-interest in any of these matters and his sole concern was to benefit his addressee. And although Hadrat Amir (A), was the one to whom these exhortations were originally addressed, but since these duties are of a universal nature, we should do our utmost so that the exhortations of the Messenger of God (S) do not go unheeded. We should know that the greatness of the love that the

Noble Messenger (S) had for Hadrat Amir (A) requires that there be a very great benefit in these matters and that they be so much important that he should have mentioned them in this manner. And God knows best.

The Evils Of Lying

One of the exhortations of the Noble Messenger (S) enjoins truthfulness and requires abstention from falsehood. The fact that it is mentioned foremost amongst his exhortations shows that its importance was greater in his venerable opinion than all the other things. We shall mention the evils of lying before the benefits and virtues of truthfulness. Hence, know that this vice is one about whose ugly and vicious character there is agreement between reason and revelation. In itself, it is one of the major sins and indecencies, as indicated by many traditions.

Moreover, at times it leads to other vices whose ugliness and viciousness is no lesser than this fatal sin. Sometimes it happens that due to the discovery of a single lie a man so loses his credibility in the eyes of the people that its loss cannot be compensated for until the end of his life. God forbid that one should ever become known for being a liar, for; perhaps, there is nothing that can do a greater injury to one's repute.

In addition to this, the religious harms and otherworldly punishments associated with it are also numerous. Here we will confine ourselves to mentioning some of the noble traditions relating to this topic and refrain from undue elaboration, for the

matter is of a clear and well-known character.

رُوِیَ فِی الوَسَائِلِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ یَعْقُوبَ بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: إنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ جَعَلَ لِلشَّرِّ أَقْفالاً وَجَعَلَ مَفَاتِیحَ تِلْکَ الأَقْفَالِ الشَّرَابَ. وَالکَذِبُ شَرٌّ مِنَ الشَّرَابِ.

In al-Wasa'il, it is narrated from Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, who reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (Imam al-Baqir) (A) that he said, “Verily, God, Almighty and Glorious, has assigned certain locks for evil and made wine the key to these locks. Yet falsehood is more evil than wine.”(١)

Now reflect a little on this sacred tradition, whose source is the Learned One of the Prophet's Household ('Alim Al Muhammad) and which is recorded in a book which serves as a source book for all the ulama of the Ummah (R)and which is accepted by all of them, and see if there remains any room for any excuse. Can a lax attitude in regard to lying have any cause other than weakness of faith in the traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A)?

We do not know the Hidden forms of our deeds and are unaware of the spiritual links between the realms of mulk and malakut. As a result, we regard this kind of traditions as far-fetched and consider those like them as overstatements. This is itself an erroneous approach arising from nescience and feeble faith. If, supposedly, we consider this noble tradition as an hyperbole, shouldn't there be some grounds for the exaggeration to be proper to the occasion? Can it be said of

١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, “kitab al iman wa al-kufr”, “bab al-kidhb” hadith no. ٣.

anything that it is worse than wine? Isn't it that the evil of that thing should be so ?great that one may hyperbolize it by stating that it is worse than wine

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ قَالَ: الكَذِبُ هُوَ خَرَابُ الإِيمَانِ.

(Hadrat Baqir al-'Ulum, i.e. Imam al-Baqir (A), said, "Lying is the ruin of faith."(۱)

Truly, such traditions as this make one's heart tremble and give one cold feet. I think lying is one of those behavioral vices, which are so prevalent that their ugliness has totally disappeared. We only become aware [of its evil character] at a time when we wake up to find our faith, which is the most vital asset of the life of the Hereafter, .forfeited as a result of this fatal sin without our knowing it

It has been narrated from the Eighth Imam (A)that he said, "The Seal of the Prophets was asked if a believer could possibly be cowardly and timid. 'Yes,' he replied. Then they asked him if he could be stingy. 'Yes,' he said. 'Can ale be a liar?' they asked him. ".'No!' came the Prophet's reply

It has been narrated from the Truthful of the Sect (Saduq al-Ta'fah, i.e. al-Shaykh al-:Suduq) that he said, "Amongst the sayings of the Messenger of God is the statement

أَرْبَی الرِّبَا الكَذِبُ.

(Lying exceeds usury [in its evil].(۲)

Such is the matter, whereas the severity of the banality of usury has been so much .emphasized as to make one amazed

Of the things that one should note is that telling an

۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, "kitab al iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-kidhb" hadith no. ۴.
۲- Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. viii, p. ۵۷۴.

untruth even in jest and for humor's sake has been considered lying and regarded with severity. The ulama have also prohibited it in their fatwas. Thus, the author of al-Wasa'il (M) has given the following title to a chapter [in his compilation] -a title that :accords with his fatwa

Chapter on the prohibition of lying, in small and big matters, in serious talk and in jest,“ ”.to the exclusion of what has been excepted

In the noble al-Kafi, it is reported through a chain of transmission reaching up to Imam al-Baqir (A) that the said, “ ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (A)used to tell his sons: ‘Refrain from falsehood in your speech, whether it is a small or big matter, whether it is said in serious talk or in jest. That is because lying in trivial matters produces the temerity to lie in big matters. Don't you know that the Messenger of Allah (S) said, “There is a servant of God who so perseveres in truthfulness that God writes his name amongst the truthful ones, and there is a servant who makes lying his wont until God, the (Exalted, styles him a liar?”(١

Again al-Kafi reports with its isnad reaching up to the venerated Asbagh ibn Nubatah :that he said

قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: لا يَجِدُ عَبْدٌ طَعْمَ الإيمَانِ حَتَّى يَتْرُكَ الكَذِبَ هَزْلَهُ وَجِدَّهُ.

The Commander of the Faithful (A) said, “One does not taste the flavor of faith until he (refrains from lying, in serious speech and in jest.”(٢

In a counsel given by the Noble

p: ٧٧٨

.Usul al-Kafi, “kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr”, “bab al-kidhb”, hadith no. ٢ -١

.Usul al-Kafi, “kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr”, “bab al-kidhb”, hadith no. ١١ -٢

:Messenger (S) to Hadrat Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, the Prophet is reported to have said

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، وَيْلٌ لِلَّذِى يُحَدِّثُ فَيَكْذِبُ لِيُضْحِكَ بِهِ القَوْمَ! وَيْلٌ لَهُ! وَيْلٌ لَهُ!

O Abu Dharr, woe to the man who tells lies in order to make other people laugh. Woe !to him! Woe to him

Now, with all these traditions and severe warnings of the Messenger of God and the Imams of guidance (A), it needs great audacity and wretchedness for one to .perpetrate this enormity and commit this serious vice

In the same way as lying has been considered as one of the most serious vices, truthfulness of speech has been commended as one of the most significant of virtues. It has been highly praised in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt, and here we will confine :ourselves to mentioning some of them

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: كُونُوا دُعَاةً لِلنَّاسِ بِالخَيْرِ بِغَيْرِ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ لِيَرَوا مِنْكُمُ الإجْتِهَادَ وَالصِّدْقَ وَالوَرَعَ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub reports with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Call people to righteousness through means other than your tongues, that they may (observe diligence, truthfulness and piety in you.'(١

The venerated Saduq reports with his isnad from the Messenger of God (S) that he said, "The nearest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection and the worthiest of my intercession will be the one who is the most truthful amongst you, the most reliable ,amongst you in regard to his trusts, the most genial of you in disposition

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١- None given.

".and the closest amongst you to the common people

The Meaning Of Wara' And Its Levels

Wara' has been reckoned as one of the stages of the wayfarer's journey. In accordance with the definition of it given by the well-known gnostic, the venerable :Khwajah 'Abd Allah Ansari, it is

هُوَ تَوَقٌّ مُسْتَقْصىً عَلَى حَذَرٍ أَوْ تَحَرُّجٍ عَلَى تَعْظِيمٍ.

It means that wara' is the utmost of restraint and the ultimate of self-vigilance accompanied with the fear of stumbling; or it means subjecting the soul to a rigorous discipline for the sake of God's glorification. And this includes all its levels, because there are many degrees of wara. Thus the wara' of the common people consists of abstaining from major sins, whereas the wara' of the elect (khassah) consists of refraining from suspect things for the fear of falling into what is unlawful)(muharramat), as indicated by the noble hadith al-tathlith.(١)

The wara' of the zahid (ascetic) consists of abstaining from lawful things for the sake of avoiding the burden (of answerability) that they entail. The wara' of the wayfarers of the path of gnosis is abstaining from beholding the world for the sake of attaining to the stations (maqamat). The wara' of those captivated by the Divine Being (majdhubun) is to relinquish the stations for reaching the Threshold of Allah and witnessing His Beauty. The wara' of the awliya' is to refrain from paying attention to ends (ghayat). Each of these has an elaborate description, engaging wherein is not .beneficial for our state

However, that which we should know in

.See the exposition of the twenty-fifth hadith on waswas, note no. ۶ -١

this connection is that the exercising of wara’ or piety in relation to what Allah has made unlawful (haram) is the root of all spiritual excellences and Hereafterly stations, and none can attain any station whatsoever except by abstaining from the .muharramat

A heart that does not possess this wara’ becomes so covered with rust and obfuscations that there ceases to be any hope of its deliverance. The purity of the souls and their burnish comes through wara’. This is the most important of the stages for the common people, and reaching it is one of the most essential goals of the wayfarer of the path of the Hereafter. Its excellence, as described in the traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A) is more than what can be mentioned in these pages. We will confine ourselves to mentioning some of these traditions, and anyone seeking .further details should refer to the compilations of hadith

الكَافِى بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: أُوصِيكَ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ وَالوَرَعِ وَالإجْتِهَادِ، وَاعْلَمْ إنَّهُ لا يَنْفَعُ اجْتِهَادٌ لا وَرَعَ فِيهِ.

In al-Kafi of, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “I exhort you concerning God-fearing, wara’, and diligence in worship, and know that a (diligence that is devoid of wara’ is of no benefit.”(١

There are still other traditions containing this theme. They indicate that a worship that is devoid of wara’ is devoid of worth. It is obvious that the main purpose of the acts of ,worship is self-discipline and restraint

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.Usu al-Kafi “kitab al-’iman wa al-kufr”, “bab al-wara”‘, hadith no. ١١ -١

and its aim is the domination of malakut over the realm of mulk and physical nature, .which cannot be perfectly realized without intense wara' and piety

The souls, which are afflicted with sinfulness and disobedience to God are unreceptive to the spiritual forms. Any effort to impress these forms on the tablet of the soul is futile unless the tablet's surface is first cleared from the obfuscations of rust. Thus worship, which is the form of the perfection of the soul, remains futile without purifying the soul from the rust of sinfulness. Without the soul's burnish, it .remains an empty form devoid of meaning, and a body without spirit

بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ خَلِيفَهَ قَالَ: وَعَظَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فَأَمرَ وَزَهَّدَ ثُمَّ قَالَ: عَلَيْكُمْ بِالوَرَعِ فَإنَّهُ لا يُنَالُ مَا عِنْدَ اللهِ إلاّ بِالوَرَعِ.

Yazid ibn Khalifah says: Abu 'Abd Allah (A) sermoned us, exhorting and directing us to adopt zuhd. Then he said, "Commit yourselves to wara', for, verily, that which is with (God cannot be attained by anything except wara'."(١

Thus, in accordance with this sacred tradition a man who is devoid of wara' is deprived from the bounties that God, the Exalted, has promised His servants, and this .is the height of wretchedness and failure

:(The following tradition is reported with isnad from Imam al-Baqir (A

The Imam said, "Our wilayah cannot be attained except with works (of righteousness) ".and piety

:In another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (A) says

One who lives in a city of a hundred thousand wherein there are other people more"

.Usu al-Kafi "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-wara"', hadith no. ٣ -١

(pious than him, such a one is not one of our followers (shi'ah)."'(١)

(The same assertion is made in a tradition recorded in the noble al-Kafi.(٢)

It should be known that, in accordance with the noble traditions, the criterion of perfection in wara' is abstention from that which has been forbidden by God, and anyone who refrains from what God has made unlawful is considered the most pious of men. So do not let Satan make this matter appear as greatly difficult in your eyes, and make you despairing and despondent. For it is the habit of that accursed one to lead man into everlasting wretchedness by the way of despair.

For instance, in this regard he will tell you: "How is it possible to the most pious person in a city of hundred thousand people or more?" This is one of the tricks of that damned creature and the insinuations of the carnal ego. The answer to this is that, in accordance with the traditions, everyone who refrains from what God has decreed as unlawful stands in the ranks of the most pious of men referred to in these traditions. Refraining from the Divine muharramat is not a very difficult task. Rather, with a measure of spiritual training and practical effort one can avoid all the muharramat.

Of course, if one desires to be one of the felicitous and one of those who attain salvation, and if one aspires for the protection of the wilayah of the Ahl al-Bayt and the

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١- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah., vol. xi, p. ١٩۶

٢- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah., vol. xi, p. ١٩۴.

mercy of God, the Exalted, without possessing at least this much of forbearance in regard to sin, that cannot be. Certainly, a measure of resistance, forbearance, and .austerity is essential

The Evils Of Treachery And The Meaning Of Trustworthiness

There is a point here that needs some elucidation, which is that the Noble Messenger (S) refers to the avoidance of betrayal of trust as a matter subsidiary to his exhortation regarding wara'. That, despite the fact that wara' relates to the generality of muharramat or, as said, is something still more inclusive. Hence 'treachery' here must either be taken in a wider sense corresponding to wara', than the customary sense of it, in which case it would include the generality of sins and perpetration of anything that is an obstacle in the Godward wayfaring and which amounts to a betrayal of trust. That is because the Divine duties are Divine trusts, as :pointed out in this noble verse

(إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا.)

We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it. Surely, he is unjust, (ignorant. (۳۳:۷۲

Some exegetes have interpreted [the 'Trust' in this verse] as the Divine duties. Rather, all the bodily members, organs, and faculties are God's trusts and their use in a manner contrary to God's good pleasure is a betrayal of trust. Similarly, turning the :heart's attention to anything other than God is a treachery

این

جان عاریت که به حافظ سپرده دوست

روزی رخش ببینم وتسلیم وی کنم

,This soul that the Friend had lent to Hafiz as a trust

.I'll restore to Him one day when I see His face

Or, what is meant by 'treachery' here is its usual sense, and that it has been singled out here for mention due to its great importance, as if the totality of wara' lay in refraining from betrayal of trust. If one were to make a study of the traditions of the Infallible Ones (A) concerning the delivery of trust and abstention from treachery, one .would understand how important this matter is in the view of the Holy Lawgiver

Moreover, its innate viciousness is not hidden from any sensible person. The perfidious person is to be reckoned as standing outside the fold of humanity and counted among the vilest of devils. It is obvious that if someone becomes notorious among the people for his treacherous and villainous character, his life will be greatly .miserable in this world itself

Mankind can lead a prosperous life in this world only through mutual help and cooperation. It is not feasible for anyone to lead an isolated existence, which is possible only if he leaves the society of men to join the fold of wild beasts. The great wheel of social life revolves on the axis of mutual confidence amongst the people. If, God forbid, mutual confidence were to depart from the life of mankind, it would not be possible for them to

lead a satisfactory life. The great pillar of mutual confidence rests on trustworthiness .and abstention from treachery

Hence, the treacherous person does not enjoy the confidence of others and is an outcast from civil life and the membership of human society. His membership is not accepted in the walks of civic existence and such a person, obviously, lives a life of hardship and misery. In order that the benefit of this section be complete, we shall cite some traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt concerning this theme, and these .suffice wakeful hearts and open eyes

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: لا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى طُولِ رُكُوعِ الرَّجُلِ وَسُجُودِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِکَ شَیْءٌ اعْتَادَهُ وَلَوْ تَرَكَهُ اسْتَوْحَشَ لِذَلِکَ. وَلَكِنِ انْظُرُوا إِلَى صِدْقِ حَدِيثِهِ وَأَدَاءِ أَمَانَتِهِ.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) narrates with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Don't look at the protracted kneelings and prostrations of a man, for that is something which he does out of habit and would be upset if he were to neglect (them. But look at the truthfulness of his speech and his fulfillment of trusts.(1)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی كَهْمَسَ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لأَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: عَبْدُاللهِ بْنُ أَبِی يَعْفُورَ يُقْرِئُکَ السَّلامَ. قَالَ: عَلَيْکَ وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ، إِذَا أَتَيْتَ عَبْدَاللهِ فَأَقْرِئْهُ السَّلامَ وَقُلْ لَهُ: إِنَّ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ يَقُولُ لَکَ انْظُرْ مَا بَلَغَ بِهِ عَلِیٌّ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَالْزَمْهُ فَإِنَّ عَلِيّاً عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ إِنَّمَا بَلَغَ مَا بَلَغَ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ بِصِدْقِ الحَدِيثِ وَأَدَاءِ الأَمَانَه.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad)

Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-sidq wa ada' l-'amanah", hadith no. -۱ .۱۲

from Abu Kahmas that he said: I said to Abu 'Abd Allah (A): "Abd Allah ibn Abi Ya'fur conveys his salam to you." The Imam replied: "May peace be upon you and upon him. When you see 'Abd Allah convey my greetings and tell him that Ja'far ibn Muhammad says to you: Consider what made 'Ali attain the standing that he attained with the Messenger of God (S) and stick to it, for, verily, 'Ali (A) attained the standing that he attained with the Messenger of Allah through truthfulness of speech and fulfillment of (trust."(١)

And you, my dear, reflect upon this sacred tradition and behold how sublime is the station of truthfulness and trustworthiness, which brought 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) to that lofty station of his! This tradition shows that the Messenger of God loved these two characteristics more than anything else, and amongst the attributes of perfection of Mawla- 'Ali (A)it were these two which had brought him so close to the Prophet and .raised him to that distinguished station

Also Imam al-Sadiq (A) recommends these two, from among all kinds of deeds and characteristics, to Ibn Abi Ya'fur, who was a dedicated and self-effacing follower of the Imam, and sends him a message asking him to cling to them, because they were .very important in his blessed eyes

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ رَضِیَ اللهُ عَنْهُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ یَقُولُ: حَافَّتَا الصِّرَاطِ یَوْمَ الْقِیَامَهِ الرَّحِمُ وَأَدَاءُ الْأَمَانَهِ. فَإِذَا مَرَّ الْوَصُولُ

Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-sidq wa ada' l-'amanah", hadith no. -١ .۵

لِلرَّحِمِ المُؤَدِّی لِلأَمَانَهِ نَفَذَ إِلَی الجَنَّهِ. وَإِذَا مَرَّ الخَائِنُ لِلأَمَانَهِ القَطُوعُ لِلرَّحِمِ لَمْ یَنْفَعْهُ مَعَهُمَا عَمَلٌ وَتَکَفَّأَ بِهِ الصِّرَاطُ فِی النَّارِ.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said: Abu Dharr (R) said: I) heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say: "On the Day of Resurrection the Womb and the Trust shall stand on the two sides of the Sirat. When one who has fulfilled the duties of kinship and discharged his trusts passes over (the Sirat), he will cross over to paradise. But when the betrayer of trust or the violator of the rights of kinship passes over it, no work of his will benefit him by the side of these (vices), and the Sirat will (turn him over into hell."(١)

This indicates that the [otherworldly] forms of the Womb and the Trust shall stand on the two sides of the Sirat in that world and they will assist one who has fulfilled the duties of blood relationship and discharged his trusts. No work will benefit him if he .has violated these two, and they will cast him into hell

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِیرُ المُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: أَدُّوا الأَمَانَهَ وَلَوْ إِلَی قَاتِلِ وُلْدِ الأَنْبِیَاءِ.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: Amir al-Mu'minin (A) said, "Discharge your trusts, even if they pertain to a murderer of the (offspring of the Prophets."(٢)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ فِی وَصِیَّهٍ لَهُ: إِعْلَمْ أَنَّ ضَارِبَ عَلِیٍّ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ بِالسَّیْفِ وَقَاتِلَهُ

١- Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab silat al-rahm", hadith no. ١١.

٢- Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi vol. v, p. ١٣٣.

لَو ائْتَمَنَنِی وَاسْتَنْصَحَنِی وَاسْتَشَارَنِی ثُمَّ قَبِلْتُ ذَلِکَ مِنْهُ لأدَّیْتُ إلَیْهِ الأمَانَهَ.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said in one of his) exhortations, "Know shat even if the assassin of 'Ali (A) who struck him with the sword, were to entrust me with something and were he to seek my advice and (counsel, and were I to accept his request, I would not betray his trust."(1)

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِیِّ بْنِ الحُسَیْنِ بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی حَمْزَهَ الثُّمَالِیِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ سَیِّدَ العَابِدِینَ عَلِیَّ بْنَ الحُسَیْنِ بْنِ عَلِیِّ بْنِ أَبِی طَالِبٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ یَقُولُ لِشِیعَتِهِ: عَلَیْکُمْ بِأَدَاءِ الأَمَانَهِ، فَوَالَّذِی بَعَثَ مُحَمَّداً صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ بِالحَقِّ نَبِیّاً لَوْ أَنَّ قَاتِلَ أَبِی الحُسَیْنِ بْنِ عَلِیٍّ عَلَیْهِمَا السَّلامُ ائْتَمَنَنِی عَلَی السَّیْفِ الَّذِی قَتَلَهُ بِهِ لأَدَّیْتُهُ إلَیْهِ.

Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn reports with his isnad from Abu Hamzah al-Thumali that he said: I heard the Master of the Devout, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A)say to his followers (shi'ah), "Commit yourself to trustworthiness; for, by Him Who sent Muhammad (S) with the Truth as a Prophet, even if the killer of my father, al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (A) were to entrust me with the sword with which he had killed him, I (would not betray his trust."(2)

وبِإسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلامُ عَنِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ فِی حَدِیثِ المَنَاهِی أَنَّهُ نَهَی عَنِ الخِیَانَهِ وَقَالَ: مَنْ خَانَ أَمَانَهً فِی الدُّنْیَا وَلَمْ یَرُدَّهَا إلَی أَهْلِهَا ثُمَّ أَدْرَکَهُ المَوْتُ مَاتَ عَلَی غَیْرِ مِلَّتِی وَیَلْقَی اللهَ وَهُوَ عَلَیْهِ غَضْبَانَ.

.Al-Kulayni, Furu' al-Kafi vol. v, p. ۱۳۳ -۱

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. xiii, p. ۲۲۵, cited from al-Saduq, al-Majalis, majlis" no. ۴۳ -۲

وَمَنِ اشْتَرَى خِيَانَةً وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ فَهُوَ كَالَّذِى خَانَهَا.

Al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A)that he narrated from his) ancestors from the Prophet (S) that, in a tradition concerning certain proscribed acts, he forbade the betrayal of trust and said, "Whoever betrays a trust in the life of the world, not delivering it to those to whom it belongs, and then dies, such a person doesn't die upon my creed and he shall meet God in a state wherein He will be wrathful with him. And whoever knowingly purchases the despoils of treachery is like (the traitor."(١)

There are other traditions of this kind, and it is obvious what consequences will result from the wrath of God's Sacred Being upon a servant. Of course, the venerable intercessors, too, will not intercede on behalf of someone who is the object of God's wrath, especially since the betrayer of trust is out of the pale of the creed of the :Messenger of Allah (S). It is stated in a (prophetic) tradition that

(Whoever commits a breach of trust in regard to a believer does not belong to me."(٢)

It is mentioned in another tradition that such a man "is outside the faith of Islam and he will be cast into the abyss of hell for ever and ever."(٣) I seek refuge in God from .the evil of this vice

It is obvious that the breach of a believer's trust includes dishonesty of a financial nature as well as other breaches of trust that are of

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Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. xiii, p. ٢٢٥, cited from al-Saduq, al-Majalis, majlis" no. ۴٣., cited -١ .from al-Saduq, Man la yuhduruhu al-faqih vol. ii, p.١٩٨

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. xiii, p. ٢٢٥, cited from al-Saduq, al-Majalis, majlis" no. ۴٣. p. ٢٢۶ -٢

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. xiii, p. ٢٢٥, cited from al-Saduq, al-Majalis, majlis" no. ۴٣ -٣

a more serious nature. Hence, one should be very vigilant of the carnal self, which may make one turn a blind eye to certain matters and make their vicious character appear as something trivial and simple, though they be the cause of everlasting wretchedness and perpetual ignominy. This is the state of those who commit treachery against God's creatures, and from this, we come to know the state of treachery in relation to the trust of God, the Exalted.

Concerning Some Divine Trusts

It should be known that God, the Blessed and the Exalted, has bestowed upon us all our outward and inward faculties and bodily members and organs. He has spread out the table of bounties and beneficence throughout the inner and outer realms of our being, subjecting all of them to our power. He delivered them to us as trusts in a form wherein all of them were pure, immaculate, and free from formal and spiritual impurities. Everything that He sent down for us from the world of the Hidden, was pure and free from any kind of contamination.

Therefore, if while meeting that Sacred Being we return these trusts to Him in the condition of purity from the contaminations of the corporeal sphere and the impurities of the mundane world and mulk, we shall be reckoned as trustworthy; otherwise we shall be held guilty of betrayal of trust and cast outside the pale of genuine Islam and the creed of the Noble Messenger (S).

It is mentioned in a famous hadith that:

قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ.

.The heart of the believer is the throne of the All-Beneficent

And it is said in a well-known hadith qudsi

لا تَسَعُنِی أَرْضِی وَلا سَمَائِی، بَلْ یَسَعُنِی قَلْبُ عَبْدِیَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.

Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is (the heart of the man of faith which can contain Me.(۱

The believer's heart is the throne and seat of Godhead and the abode of that Sacred Being. That Sacred Being is the owner of the heart. Riveting the heart's attention on other than God, the Exalted, is a breach of His trust. The love of anything other than that of the Holy Being and His elect, loving whom is the same as loving Him, is considered a treachery in the creed of gnosis. The wilayah of the Household of Purity and Infallibility and the friendship of the Family of the Messenger (A) and the gnosis of .their holy station is a Divine trust

Accordingly, in many noble traditions the word 'Trust' (in verse ۳۳:۷۲) has been interpreted as the wilayah of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (A). In the same way as the usurpation of the authority and office of that personage is a treason, so also the failure to follow that sacred personage is one of the degrees of treachery. And it is mentioned in the sacred traditions that "A shi'ah is one who follows [the Ahl-al-Bayt] in a complete manner. Otherwise, the mere claim of being a shi'ah will not be considered

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.Ithaf al-sadat al-muttaqin, vol. vii, p. ۲۳۴ -۱

".(as tashayyu' (shi'i hood

Many of our fancies belong to the category of fake longings. At the mere feeling of love for Hadrat Amir (A) in our hearts, we become proud of this love and imagine that this love will survive even if we don't continue to follow him. But what surety is there that this attachment will survive if we fail to take care of it and if we neglect the "attendant qualities of this love

It is possible that during the pangs of death, which are experienced by all except the Faithful (mu'minun) and the Sincere (mukhlasun), one may forget 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) as a result of the panic and terror of the last agony. It is mentioned in a tradition that a group of sinners facing punishment in hell will forget the name of the Noble Messenger (S). When their term of punishment draws to its close and they are purged of and purified from the filth of sin, the blessed name of the Prophet shall come to .their memory, or they will be reminded of it

Thereupon, they will raise the cry of 'Wa Muhammada!' O Muhammad! (S). Thereat, they will receive mercy and release. We imagine that the encounter with death and the last agony is something similar to the experiences of this world. My dear! A short attack of fever is sufficient to make you forget everything that you know. Think what will happen when those calamities, agonies, terrors, and panics hold you in

their grip! If one loves and fulfills the requisites of that love, remembering the beloved and following him, of course, such a love of the absolute friend and the absolute beloved of God shall enjoy Divine favor.

But if one makes merely a claim unaccompanied by action, or, rather, accompanied by defiance, it is possible that before he departs from this world its diversions, vicissitudes, and shifting scenes may lead one to forsake the love of that Master, or, na'udhubilldh, turn one into his enemy. We have seen persons who claimed to befriend God and the Messenger (S) but who, after moving about in degenerate company and adopting evil conduct, became hostile to the Prophet and his Family (A).

And even if, supposedly, one were to depart from this world with that love, though he will ultimately attain salvation and felicity in accordance with certain noble traditions and sacred verses, yet he will still have to suffer the afflictions of Barzakh and the terrors of death and resurrection in accordance with this tradition: "We shall intercede in your favor on the Day of Resurrection. But it is up to yourselves to do something for the life of Barzakh."(۱)

I seek God's refuge from the punishment and pressures of the grave and the hardships and tortures of Barzakh, which have no resemblance to anything in this world. That door of hell which opens into the grave, should it be opened upon this world, it will destroy all its creatures. God be

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۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. iv, p. ۶۸۸.

.our refuge from such horrors

The Fear Of God Almighty

Know that the fear of God, the Exalted, is one of the stages that is hardly equaled by any other in respect of the common people. Aside from the fact that this fear is itself one of spiritual excellences, it is the source of many virtues of the spirit and one of the important reforming agents of the soul. Rather, it may be reckoned as the mainspring .of all reform and the healing source of all spiritual ailments

A human being with faith in God and a wayfarer and emigrant towards Allah should give utmost importance to this stage and pay great attention to everything that increases it in the heart and strengthens its roots, such as the remembrance of chastisement and punishment, recalling the severity of the perilous passes of death, and, after death, those of Barzakh and resurrection, the terrors of the Sirat, the Balance, the scrutinies of the Reckoning, and the various punishments of hell, as well, as the remembrance of the Might, Glory, Irresistibility, and Sovereignty of God and the remembrance of the gradualness of deviation (istidraj), the Divine stratagems, the possible evil of one's ultimate end and the like. Since we have in these pages described all these stages to some extent, we shall confine ourselves here to citing :some traditions concerning the merits of the fear of God

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنِ إسْحَاقَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: «خَفِ اللّهَ كَأَنَّکَ تَرَاهُ، وَإنْ كُنْتَ لا تَرَاهُ فَإنَّهُ

يَرَاكَ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَرَى أَنَّهُ لا يَرَاكَ فَقَدْ كَفَرْتَ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ثُمَّ بَرَزْتَ لَهُ بِالمَعْصِيَةِ، فَقَدْ جَعَلْتَهُ مِنْ أَهْوَنِ النَّاظِرِينَ إِلَيْكَ.»

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub reports with his isnad from Ishaq ibn 'Ammar that he said: Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said, "O Ishaq, fear God as if you see Him. For if you don't see Him, indeed He sees you. And if you imagine that He does not see you, you have disbelieved. And if you know that indeed He sees you and yet go forth to disobey Him, (then you have made Him the least of onlookers who behold you."(١)

Know that if someone should understand the character of the manifestation of the Divine in mulk and malakut and the revelation of that Sacred Essence in the heavens and the earths, either through unmediated (huduri) experience, or epiphany, or through real faith, and should he apprehend the relation of God to creation and the relation of creation to God as it really is, and should he have the knowledge of the character of the manifestation of the Divine Will in determinate things and their dissolution fana'in it, as it really is, he would know that God, the Exalted, is present in all places and realms, and he would observe Him with unmediated knowledge ('ilm :(huduri) in all existents, as stated by Imam al-Sadiq (A

مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إلاّ وَرَأَيْتُ الله مَعَهُ أَوْ فِيهِ.

.I don't see a thing without seeing God with it or in it

In the intimacy of the nawafil

.Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-khawf wa al-raja'," hadith no. ٢ -١

:supererogatory prayers) the true meaning of)

كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ وَيَدَهُ.

,I will be his hearing, his sight and his hand

and other than that will become disclosed to him. Then, he will see, in accordance with his own station, the Divine Presence in all the levels of being, knowledgewise or .faithwise or through direct experience and epiphany

Of course, at this stage, the wayfarer-whatever his rank-would observe the etiquette of the Divine Presence and refrain from the defiance of that Sacred Essence. That is because the observance of presence and its etiquette is something innate in human beings, and no matter how shameless a person might be, absence and presence [of someone are not the same for him, especially when the presence is that of the All-mighty and the All-perfect Provider, which is independently impressed in the .presence-observing nature of everyone

The Disparity Of People In Observing The Divine Presence

It should be known that every believer, wayfarer, gnostic, and wali observes the etiquette of the Divine Presence in a manner that is special to him. Hence, the faithful and the God-fearing consider observance of the presence to lie in abstaining from unlawful things and in observing the precepts. The majdhubun consider it to lie in refraining from attending to other-than-God and in directing one's perfect and complete attention to God. The awliya' and the Perfect consider it to lie in the .negation of otherness, as well as the negation of the ego

In fine, one of the sublime stations of the gnostics and the people of the heart is the experience of

Divine Presence and its observance. Hence, with the apprehension of the character of God's active knowledge and the dissolution of all things in His Sacred Essence and the presence of all beings before Him, and with the understanding that the realm of being is present before the Lord, each of them, whatever his station, observes the .requisites of presence. Also, this is an innate characteristic of the human nature

The Noble Messenger (S) has referred to the first station in the spiritual counsel that he gave to Hadrat Amir (A) and which we are now engaged in expounding. The same station is referred to in the noble tradition narrated by Ishaq ibn 'Ammar, wherein the :Imam (A) says

وَالثَّالِثَهُ الخَوْفُ مِنَ اللهِ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ كَأَنَّکَ تَرَاهُ.

.And the third thing is to fear God-sublime is His remembrance-as if you see Him

:And where he says

خَفِ الله كَأَنَّکَ تَرَاهُ.

.Fear God as if you see Him

:Imam al-Sadiq (A) refers to the second station where he says

وَإِنْ كُنْتَ لا تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاکَ.

.For if you don't see Him, verily He sees you

Imam al-Sadiq (A) refers to the natural proclivity to observe presence in his :statement

وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ يَرَاکَ...

And if you know that He indeed sees you

...

Further, there are various levels of the fear in accordance with the different levels of

the faithful, the wayfarers, and the people of austerities and gnosis, and one of its higher levels is the fear of the Greatness of God and the manifestations of Divine Might and Glory. It is possible

not to reckon this station as a level of ‘fear’, as stated by the famous ‘arif in Manazil al-sa’irin:

وَلَيْسَ فِى مَقَامِ أَهْلِ الخُصُوصِ وَحْشَةٌ إلاّ هَيْبَةَ الإجْلالِ.

That is, there exists no fear for the people of the heart and the mysteries of wilayah except the awe of Divine Majesty, Magnificence, Greatness, and Glory.

The Virtues Of Lamentation

There are many virtues in weeping and lamenting for the tear of God. As mentioned in this noble hadith, God shall build a thousand mansions in paradise for every tear that is shed in fear of Him. The venerable Shaykh Saduq (R) narrates with his unbroken chain of transmission from Imam al-Sadiq (A)from his forefathers, from the Noblest Messenger (S) that he said in a tradition relating to certain things that one should refrain from: “One whose eyes weep from the fear of God shall be bestowed for every tear that he sheds a palace ornamented with jewels and pearls every paradise the like of which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart has ever imagined.”

عَنْ ثَوَابِ الأَعْمَالِ: بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: لَيْسَ شَىْءٌ إلاّ وَلَهُ شَىْءٌ يَعْدِلُهُ إلاّ اللهُ، فَإنَّهُ لا يَعْدِلُهُ شَىْءٌ، وَلا إلَهَ إلاّ اللهُ لا يَعْدِلُهُ شَىْءٌ، وَدَمْعَةٌ مِنْ خَوْفِ اللهِ فَإنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِثْقَالٌ، فَإنْ سَالَتْ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ لَمْ يَرْهَقْهُ قَتَرٌ وَلا ذِلَّةٌ بَعْدَهَا أَبَداً.

In the Thawab al-‘a’mal (al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja’far (A)that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “Except God,

there is nothing that doesn’t have an equal, for, verily, nothing equals Him. And there is nothing, which equals [the statement], “There is no god except God.” And [the worth of] a tear shed in fear of God cannot be weighed by anything, for the face on which it ”.flows shall never ever he covered with abasement and humiliation thereafter

In al-Kafi, it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that “Everything has a weight and measure except tears, for a tear is sufficient to extinguish seas of fire.” And he said, “If there is a single person who weeps [out of fear of God] in a community (ummah), all of its members receive Divine mercy.” There is a large number of traditions containing (this theme.(١

Doubts Regarding Disproportionate Award

That which is essential to point out here is that some feeble souls lacking conviction question the possibility of such great rewards for trivial matters. They are ignorant of the fact than if something appears small to us in this world that does not prove that its Hidden and malakuti form be trivial and insignificant as well. For it is often the case that a minute creature has an inward and malakuti being that is extremely great and .magnificent

Thus the holy frame and physical form of the last and the noblest of Messengers, the honored and the venerable Prophet (S) was one of the small existents of this world, whereas his holy spirit encompassed the realms of mulk and malakut and was the mediating

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.For the traditions cited in this section, see Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol. xi, pp. ١٧٥-١٧٩ -١

.means for the creation of the heavens and the earths

Therefore, to judge the inward and malakuti form of something as trivial and small, presumes the knowledge of the world of malakut and the inward reality of things. Hence the like of us have no right to make such a Judgment. Rather, we should open our ears to the pronouncements of those who have the knowledge of the world of .(Hereafter, that is, the prophets and the awliya' (A

Another point is that the basis of that world rests on the expansive bounteousness and the infinite mercy of God, Glorious and Exalted. There is no limit or hound to the munificence of God, the Exalted, arid it is the height of ignorance and nescience to doubt the generosity of the Absolutely Generous and the infinite mercy of the All-.merciful

All these bounties that He has bestowed upon His creatures, which minds cannot encompass, or, rather, even the comprehension of whose general features confounds the intellects, have been awarded without asking and without any background of deservedness. So why should it appear incredible if He, out of His sheer generosity and without any prior deservedness, gives a manifold reward to His servants? A world whose very basis has been decreed in accordance with [the :principle of] the influence of the human will, and regarding which He has said

(وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ.)

(Therein being whatever the souls desire, and the eyes delight in. (۴۳:۷۱

is it possible to regard it as tar-fetched and

improbable, although that which the human soul desires is without limit and boundless? God, Blessed and Exalted, has so determined that world and has so fashioned the human will that anything that it wills would come into existence by the .sheer act of the will

My dear! The number of the noble traditions and narrations relating to this kind of rewards is not one or two so that there should remain any room for denial. Rather, their number exceeds the limit of tawatur. All the reliable and trustworthy works of hadith are replete with this kind of traditions. They are such as if we have heard them .(directly from the Infallible Ones themselves (A

Their character is not such as to allow one to take resort in interpretation (ta'wil). Therefore, to deny the truth of this matter without any grounds-a matter that is in accordance with mutawatir texts and is not contrary to any discursive proof, or rather agrees with a certain kind of proof-such a denial springs from weakness of faith and extreme ignorance. Man should submit to the statements of the prophets and the .(awliya' (A

Nothing is better for human perfection than submission to the awliya' of God, especially in matters which human reason cannot fathom and there is no way to whose understanding except the way of revelation and prophethood. Should man try to butt in his inadequate intellect and his fancies and presumptions on matters of the Hidden and the Hereafter and those relating to worship

and religious law, that would ultimately lead him, little by little and in gradual stages, .to deny even the self-evident necessities of the faith

Even if, supposedly, you should doubt the authenticity of the traditions and their chains of transmission-though there is no room for such a doubt-you cannot question the authority of the Noble Scripture of God, the Glorious and the Celestial Qur'an. The likes of such rewards are also mentioned there, as in the following statements of God, :the Exalted

(لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ.)

(The Night of al-Qadr is better than a thousand months. (۹۷:۳

(مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّهٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِى كُلِّ سُنْبُلَهٍ مِائَهُ حَبَّهٍ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ.)

The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of God is as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. So God multiplies (unto whom He will, God is All-embracing, All-Knowing. (۲:۲۶۱

My conjecture is that one of the factors responsible for the tendency to regard such rewards as far-fetched and unlikely and to deny their truth is the exaggerated sense of the worth of our works and pride in them. For instance, if someone fasts on a day and spends a whole night in prayer and later on hears that such acts have a very great reward, he does not regard such a thing as unlikely, although such a thing is far-fetched if one were to go by (the proportionality of) wages

and work. But since he considers this act of his as something big and takes pride in it, .he affirms the otherworldly reward of that act

My dear! This entire duration of our lives, which is some fifty or sixty years. Even if, supposedly, we carry out therein all our religious duties and leave the world with a sound faith, with righteous deeds, and a valid repentance, what measure of reward, do you think, do this measure of works and this faith of ours deserve? Yet, in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah and the consensus of all religious creeds, such a person receives Divine mercy and goes to paradise, a paradise where he will enjoy everlasting gifts and comfort and dwell in eternal mercy, bliss and fragrance. Is ?there any room for denying the truth of this

And if one were to go by the idea of compensation for work-that is, if we make the invalid assumption that our works deserve compensation-it could not be so disproportionate, quality- as well as quantity-wise, to be beyond the comprehension of human reason. This shows that the matter is based on another foundation and revolves around some other axis. If we understand this, there no longer remains any .ground for denying this truth or considering it unlikely and far-fetched

Raising The Hands In Prayer And Turning Them

Apparently, the statement of the noble tradition, “Make it your practice to raise your hands during prayer and to turn them,” refers to lifting them at the time of takbirat [”[i.e. pronouncing “Allahu akbar

By ‘turning’ them (taqlib) is probably meant the turning of the palms in the direction of the kiblah. Raising the hands at the time of saying the takbirat is one of the .mustahabbat

Or, perhaps, that which is meant in the hadith is the raising of hands at the time of qunut, and that which is meant by turning them is turning the palms upwards towards the sky, in accordance with the fatwa of the fuqaha’ (R) who have considered it mustahabb, although they disagree concerning its basis in the sources (dalil), even though no other basis is needed after the definite practice of the devout who know no other manner of saying the qunut, and the mere raising of hands in whatever manner is not sufficient. In any case, that which is more evident (azhar) is that that which is .meant in this sacred tradition is the first probability mentioned

One should know that the predominant (mashhur) opinion amongst the fuqaha’ (R) is that it is mustahabb to raise one’s hands while saying the takbirat and some of them have held it to be obligatory on the basis of the apparent import (zahir) of certain prescriptions and traditions that have been narrated in regard to the interpretation of ,the sacred verse

(فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّکَ وَانْحَرْ.)

that the word nahr in the command of God, the Exalted, means the raising of the hands at the time of takbirat.(۱) But there are many indications in the traditions, which imply its istihbab, such as the

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۱- Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. v, pp. ۶۸۳-۶۸۴, the exegesis of Surat al-Kawthar, hadith ۱۷-۱۹.

reasons that are mentioned therein, especially in the tradition narrated by al-Fadl ibn .(Shadhan from Imam al-Rida (A

In addition to this, the sahih tradition of ‘Ali ibn Ja’far(١) is explicit (nass) on its not being obligatory, and the apparent import (zahir) of these traditions, without taking into account the indications to the contrary, is that it is obligatory. The way to reconcile them is by considering them to imply istihbab by overruling the zahir in the .favor of the nass

And that riwayah, although it exempts others than the imam from raising the hands- and one may claim that apparently it applies to both the imam and the ma’mumun and that it is silent about the prayer offered singly by an individual (furada)-it does not preclude the possibility that the raising of hands be obligatory for all, and the imam’s raising them exempts the ma’mumun from it, in the same way as the qira’ah of the imam exempts others from doing their own qira’ah. On the .basis of this probability, which is the more evident of the probable meanings of the tradition, the objection of some later authorities, which requires taking of the general in a particular sense, is .also avoided

However, the absence of any opinion to this effect and the predominant opinion among early and latter day legists, as well as the inner and external indications leave no room for a debate, and even this much of detail was outside the scope of these ,pages. In any case

p:٨٠٦

.Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol. iv, p. ٧٢۶, “kitab al-salat” bab ٩ -١

the raising of hands is supererogatory and it is not appropriate for one to omit it as far as possible, especially in a case such as this wherein there are some amongst the ulama who hold it to be obligatory. Accordingly, it is also required by caution in .religious matters that one should not omit it

The Secret Behind The Raising Of The Hands

In any case, the raising of the hands during prayer at the time of every takbirah gives elegance to it, and this is the manner of the prayer of Gabriel (A) and the angels of the seven heavens, as reported in a narration by Asbagh ibn Nubatah from Amir al-Mu'minin,(١) (A). According to a certain citation from the 'Ilal and the 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida (A), Imam al-Rida (A) has said, "The reason for raising the hands at takbirah is that it carries a kind of absorption (inqita'), sincere dedication (takhlis), and humility .('(tadarru

Hence God, the Exalted, likes His servant to be totally attentive towards Him at the time of remembering Him and to be humble and sincere. And it is for the reason that one's attention be focused by the raising of the hands, thereby becoming alert in (one's intent, with a receptive heart,"(٢

This statement accords with that which some gnostics say, that the 'other' [than God] is rejected behind one's back by means of the raising of the hands and the thorns in the path of access to Him are removed, cutting one off from everything else and making one pure and

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.Majma' al-bayan, the exegesis of Surat al-Kawthar -١

Wasail al-Shi'ah, vol. iv, p. ٧٢٧, "kitab al-salat," "abwab takbirat al-ihram," bab ٩, -٢ .hadith ١١

sincere, without a trace of attention towards another, which is shirk in the creed of love, whereat one proceeds to the real spiritual ascent (mi'raj) and commences the voyage towards Allah. This voyage and ascent are not possible without the rejection of the 'other' and 'otherness' and without freedom from the ego and egoism. Hence, with the sevenfold opening takbirat, all the seven curtains (hujub) of mulk and .malakut are removed

Thus the prayer of the awliya' is such that they remove a curtain with every takbirah, abandoning the realms associated with these veils, leaving behind the inmates of these habitats, whereafter another curtain is removed for them and their hearts receive yet another conditioned epiphany (tajalli taqyidi). But that does not become an obstacle in their way and it does not engage their attention or preoccupy their hearts. They remove it with yet another takbirah, as if from the inner core of their hearts :there arises the song

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَجَلَّى تَجَلِّياً تَقْلِيدِيّاً.

Allah is greater than that He should manifest Himself with a conditioned manifestation ,((tajjali

as declared by the mentor and shaykh of the awliya' and the mukhlasun, the dedicated friend of the All-Beneficent [the Khalil al-Rahman, i.e. the Prophet Abraham (A)] during that journey of gnosis, epiphany and conditioned tajalliyat. Thus the wayfarer towards Allah, the traveler of the path of love, and the dedicated traveler of the road of communion removes one veil after another until he reaches the last takbirah with which he removes the seventh

,veil and rejects every ‘other’ and ‘otherness,’ declaring

(وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِی لِلَّذِی فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ.)

(I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth. (۶:۷۹

with Abraham, the Khalil. Thereafter, the door is opened for him and lie experiences the majesties of Divine Glory. Thereat he seeks refuge with God and enters in the Name of God, the Exalted. To this refers the noble tradition of Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn :(al-Husayn (R) who reports with his isnad from Abu al-Hasan (A

بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی الحَسَنِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّهُ رَوَی لِذَلِکَ عِلَّهً أُخْرَی وَهِیَ: أنَّ النَّبِیَّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ لَمَّا أُسْرِیَ بِهِ إِلَی السَّمَاءِ قَطَعَ سَبْعَ حُجُبٍ فَکَبَّرَ عِنْدَ کُلِّ حِجابٍ تَکْبِیرَهً فَأَوْصَلَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِذَلِکَ إِلَی مُنْتَهَی الکَرَامَهِ.

Al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Abu al-Hasan (A) that he has) narrated another reason for it and that is that when the Prophet (S) was carried on his celestial journey, he pierced seven veils (hijab), pronouncing the takbirah at every hi jab, whereby Allah, Almighty and Glorious, enabled him to attain to the ultimate (nobility (muntaha al-karamah).(۱)

In another hadith nearly the same thing has been narrated from Imam Musa ibn Ja’far(۲) (A) except that it is mentioned there that the Messenger of God (S) pronounced the takbirat after the removal of every hijab. This is more in agreement from the viewpoint of gnostic teaching and the mystic way, for a hijab and curtain is removed at every raising of the hands, and a takbirah is pronounced on the

Wasail al-Shi’ah, vol. iv, p. ۷۲۷, “kitab al-salat,” “abwab takbirat al-ihram,” bab ۷, -۱ .hadith ۵

Wasail al-Shi’ah, vol. iv, p. ۷۲۷, “kitab al-salat,” “abwab takbirat al-ihram,” bab ۷, pp. -۲ .۷۲۲-۷۲۳, hadith ۷

manifestation of each of the lights of nobility. And since that is a conditioned light from among the hijabs of light, it is removed with the raising of the two hands and cast away until the tajalli becomes absolute and. the ultimate nobility (muntaha al-karamah), which is the ultimate goal. of the awliya', is attained. Hence, the earlier .tradition can be interpreted in the light of the second one

Whatever the case may be, we are unable to understand these things, to say nothing of epiphany (shuhud) and communion (wasul). But what is worse and more unfortunate for us is that we also deny all spiritual stations and degrees and consider the celestial ascensions (mi'raj) of the awliya' and the prayers of the pure ones like those of our own, regarding their perfection as similar, though of a superior degree, .to our own performances

The limit of our imagination, beyond which we are unable to apprehend anything, is to imagine that their salat is good in its qira'ah and other points of etiquette and free from shirk, ostentation, and love of fame, or that their worship was not for the sake of the fear of hell or on account of the craving for paradise. These, of course, are one of their ordinary stations, and their salat, this spiritual ascension, has other stations that .lie beyond our imagination

A Warning Concerning One Of The Satanic Ruses

A warning is essential at this point and that is that the worst obstacle in the path of ,perfection and attainment of spiritual stations

which is also one of the major masterpieces of Satan, the highwayman, is the negation of the Hidden spiritual stations and degrees. This negation and denial is the root cause of all kinds of misguidance and ignorance and the cause of spiritual stagnation and torpor. It kills the spirit of eagerness, which is the heavenly stead (buraq) for ascending to spiritual excellences. It extinguishes the fires of love, which represents the angelic wings for undertaking the heavenward spiritual journey .towards perfection, stopping man from making his spiritual quest

On the contrary, if one has sincere faith in spiritual stations and the lofty ascents of gnosis, perchance this might help in rekindling the innate fire of love buried under the dust and ashes of carnal desires and illuminate the torch of yearning in the depths of the heart, thus gradually prompting one to seek and to undertake the labors of the quest so that one becomes worthy of Divine guidance and the assistance of that .Sacred Essence. And all praise belongs to God

The Merit Of Brushing The Teeth

It should be known that brushing the teeth, which has been enjoined by the Noblest Messenger (S) in this noble tradition, is absolutely one of the recommended etiquettes of the Shari'ah and has been stressed for certain particular occasions, such as before wudu' and prayer, at the time of reciting the Qur'an, at daybreak, and on waking up from sleep. It has been highly recommended and greatly emphasized in the sacred traditions, and many a fruitful quality and profitable result

is ascribed to it. Here, in these pages, we shall cite some of them for the sake of tabarruk

الکَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: فِی السِّوَاکِ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَهَ خِصْلَهً: هُوَ مِنَ السُّنَّهِ وَمُطَهِّرَهٌ لِلْفَمِ وَمَجْلاهٌ لِلْبَصَرِ وَیُرْضِی الرَّبَّ وَیُذْهِبُ البَلْغَمَ وَیَزِیدُ فِی الحِفْظِ وَیُبَیِّضُ الأَسْنَانَ وَیُضَاعِفُ الحَسَنَاتِ وَیُذْهِبُ بِالحَفْرِ وَیَشُدُّ اللَّثَّهَ وَیُشَهِّی الطَّعَامَ وَیَفْرَحُ بِهِ المَلائِکَهَ.

In al-Kafi (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “There are twelve qualities associated with the brushing of teeth: it is part of the Prophet’s sunnah (it is mentioned in many traditions that brushing the teeth is one of the sunnah of the prophets.(۱) it purifies the mouth, strengthens eyesight, is pleasing to the Lord, takes away the phlegm, sharpens the memory, whitens the teeth, doubles the merit of good acts, stops tooth decay, strengthen the gums, increases (appetite and is delightful to the angels.”(۲

Nearly the same thing is mentioned in another tradition. The tooth decay mentioned in this noble tradition consists of cavities and pustules formed at the root of the teeth, which produce a white and bad-smelling pus and burst at the time of chewing the food. This pus gets mixed with the food and causes many ailments such as indigestion, etc. Present-day physicians call it pyorrhea and consider it a serious .condition whose remedy may require even pulling out of the teeth

Hence, aside from the inward Hidden aspects, the most significant of which is the good pleasure of God, it is good for

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۱- Al-Khisal, vol. ii, p. ۴۴۹, bab ۱۰, hadith ۵۱.

۲ - Furu’ al-Kafi, vol. vi, pp. ۴۹۵-۴۹۶, “kitab al-zayy wa al-tajammul,” “bab al-siwak,” hadith ۶.

one to make it a regular practice for the sake of physical health and cleanliness and to perform this perpetual sunnah of the prophets. It is mentioned in a tradition that the Noblest Messenger (S) said, "So much did Gabriel recommend the brushing of teeth to me that I became concerned for my teeth..."(۱) And he said, "If it were not for the fear of hardship I would have made the brushing of the teeth obligatory on my ummah (before every wudu' and every salat."(۲

The Noblest Messenger (S) used to keep the miswak [the stick used for brushing the teeth] and the water for wudu' at the head of his bed at night and he would cover up the vessel containing water. On waking from his sweet sleep he would brush his teeth, perform wudu', and then offer four rak'ahs of prayer and go to sleep again. Again he would wake up, brush his teeth, perform wudu' and offer prayer. After mentioning this practice of the Prophet in a hadith, Imam al-Sadiq (A) declares, "You have a good (example to emulate in the Messenger of God (S)."(۳

It is stated in hadith that two rak'ahs of prayer performed after brushing the teeth is superior to seventy rak'ahs performed without it. It is stated that if one forgets to brush his teeth before wudu', it is mustahabb to do so after it and to rinse the mouth thrice with water.(۴) The number of traditions on this topic is quite large

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۱- Furu' al-Kafi, vol. vi, p. ۴۹۶, hadith ۸.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. i, p. ۳۵۵, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab al-siwak," bab ۵, hadith ۳.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. i, p. ۳۵۵, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab al-siwak," p. ۳۵۶, bab ۶, hadith ۱.

۴- Bihar al-'anwar, vol. ۷۳, pp. ۱۳۲-۱۳۳, "kitab al-adab wa al-sunan," "bab al-siwak wa al-hathth 'alayh," hadith ۳۲-۳۴.

(and anyone who wants to study them should refer to the works of our companions.(١)

Moral Virtues And Vices

Although we have discussed a number of times-in detail and in several relevant places in these pages, to an extent that appeared appropriate and within easy reach-the soul's moral dispositions and the method of acquiring ethical virtues and avoiding vices, here we will give a concise and comprehensive explanation.

It should be known that 'disposition' (khulq) is a state of the soul that inclines it to action without the need of thought or reflection. For instance, someone who has the disposition of generosity is induced by it to give and expend generously without any preliminary thoughts and without reflecting on the preponderants on each side. He acts as if it were one of his natural acts, like seeing and hearing.

In the same way, a soul that is chaste, for which the attribute of chastity has become a disposition, preserves itself with such ease as if that were part of its natural behavior. Until the soul does not attain to this station through self-discipline, reflection, and repeated action, it cannot attain a disposition and the spiritual perfection associated with it. Otherwise, the danger always remains, if the trait be one of moral perfections, that it be eroded and overwhelmed by vicious dispositions.

However, if it were to become like one of the natural activities and should one's faculties and organs be brought under control and were the rule and sovereignty of God to manifest itself within the

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١- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. i, pp. ٣٥٣, ٣٥٥-٣٥۶, "kitab al-taharah," bab ٣, ٥-۶.

.soul, its decline would be difficult, and such a thing happens only rarely

The ethicians have stated that this state and disposition of the soul is at times innate in human beings. Whether good or evil, felicitous or wretched, it is based on the original nature and related to temperament. As is well known, some persons are disposed towards goodness from infancy and some are inclined towards evil. Some are enraged at the smallest annoyance or are alarmed by a trivial matter, or panic at .the slightest cause. Others are quite the opposite

At other times these psychic dispositions are acquired through habit, social intercourse, thought and reflection. Sometimes they are first acquired by means of thought and reflection until they become habitual. In this regard there is a difference of opinion amongst them, to discuss which and to engage with whose details would take us beyond the scope of these pages and divert us from our main aim. We shall .mention here only that which is appropriate and beneficial in this regard

It should be known that when it is said that a disposition is natural or innate it does not mean that it is essential (dhati) and unchangeable. Rather, all habits (malikat) and psychic dispositions are capable of change. As long as the soul remains in this world of change and transition, it is subject to time and renewal; and as long as it is associated with matter (hayula) and potentiality (quwwah), the human being can change all its dispositions

and transform them into their opposites. This claim is affirmed, besides metaphysical proof (burhan), by experience, as well as by the summons of the prophets and the true religions to noble dispositions and their restraining people from the opposite .qualities

It should be known that the experts of ethics have divided all virtues of the soul under four heads, which are: wisdom (hikmah), chastity ('iffah), courage (shaja'ah), and justice ('adalah). Wisdom is regarded as the virtue of the rational discerning soul (nafs al-natiqah-ye mumayyizah); courage as a virtue of the irascible soul (nafs al-ghadabiyyah); chastity as a virtue of the appetitive soul (nafs al-shahwiyyah), and .justice as a state of moderation of these threefold virtues

All other virtues are considered derived from these four. However, the definition and details of each one of them lie outside the scope of these pages and are not that useful for the likes of us. That which must be known is that in accordance with this :(tradition narrated from the Noblest Messenger (S

بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمِ الأَخْلاقِ.

(I have been sent to perfect noble dispositions,(۱)

the purpose and result of the summons of the Seal of the Prophets (S) is the perfection of morality. In the noble traditions, both that are brief and those which are elaborate, moral excellences have been given more importance than anything else .after doctrinal teachings (ma'arif). Hereafter, we will cite some of them, God willing

Their importance is greater than what we are capable of explaining adequately, but that which we know

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۱- Majma' al-bayan, exegesis of verse ۴ of Surat al-Qalam.

for certain is that the asset of the everlasting life of the hereafter and the capital asset of the life of that abode is the acquisition of noble dispositions and the possession of moral excellences. The paradise which is given to man for the sake of moral excellence, is the paradise of Attributes, incomparable to the physical paradise of Act, wherein the greatest and the fairest of physical bounties and delights are present. Similarly, the darkness and the terrors that seize man due to evil deeds are .more terrible than any torture

As long as man is in this world, he can liberate himself from this darkness and attain those lights. Yes, he can do that, but not with this half -heartedness, slackness, torpor, feebleness, and negligence of ours, who, as we see ourselves, retain every ugly disposition and undesirable trait with which we have grown up since our childhood days or have acquired in improper company and friendship. Rather, we keep on adding to this burden every day, as if we didn't believe that there is another world and :another phase of lasting existence

وای اگر از پس امروز بود فردایی

(Woe, if there be a tomorrow after this!(۱)

As if the summons of the prophets and the awliya' (A) have nothing to do with us. Who knows, where these dispositions and conduct of us will take us and in what form we shall be resurrected? We would wake up at a time when we could do nothing and regret and shame would

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۱- Adapted from the following couplet of Hafiz: گر مسلمانی از این است که حافظ دارد آه اگر از پی امروز بود فردایی

.be our lot, and we shall have none to reproach except ourselves

The prophets (A) have shown the path of felicity and the learned and the wise have expounded their statements for us and described the method of curing inner diseases, translating these teachings into every language and disseminating them in various forms. But these things did not enter our ears, and we closed our eyes, ears, and our hearts to them. Therefore, all blame rests on our own shoulders, as stated by the Messenger of God (S) in the present tradition in whose exposition we are engaged. So replete with exhortation for acquisition of moral virtues and abstention from vices are the traditions and reports that its extent is incalculable, yet we neglect .even to refer to their books

And you, my dear! If you are used to traditions and narrations, refer to the sacred works of tradition, especially the noble al-Kafi. If you are used to scientific discourse and the jargon of scholars, refer to such ethical texts as the Taharat al-a'raq,(١) and the books of marhum al-Fayd al-Kashani, al-Majlisi and the two Naraqis.(٢) And if you do not consider yourself to be in need of acquiring [the knowledge of ethical principles] or do not consider the acquisition of noble dispositions and abstention from vicious dispositions as essential, then find a remedy for your ignorance which is the .mother of all diseases

We conclude this topic with the mention of some noble traditions related to this theme :for tabarruk's sake

الفَقِيهُ:

١- By Miskawayh, ethical philosopher and historian of the ٥th/١١th century.

٢- Among these works are Muhajjat al-bayda', al-Kalimat al-maknunah, and al-Ilayal al-jawid by al-Fayd al-Kashani, Haqq al-yaqin by al-Allamah al-Majlisi, Jami' al-sa'adat by Mulla Mahdi al-Naraqi and Mi'raj al-sa'adah by Mulla Ahmad al-Naraqi.

بإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ اللهَ خَصَّ رَسُولَهُ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِمَكَارِمِ الأَخْلاقِ فَامْتَحِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ، فَإنْ كَانَتْ فِيكُمْ فَاحْمَدُوا اللهَ وَارْغَبُوا إلَيْهِ فِى الزِّيَادَهِ مِنْهَا؛ فَذَكَرَهَا عَشْرَهً: اليَقِينُ وَالقَنَاعَهُ وَالصَّبْرُ وَالشُّكْرُ وَالحِلْمُ وَحُسْنُ الخَلْقِ وَالسَّخَاءِ وَالغِيرَهُ وَالشَّجَاعَهُ وَالمُرُوءَهُ.

In Man La yahduruh al-faqih, (al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “Verily, God favored His Messenger (S) with noble dispositions. So test yourselves and if you find them in yourselves, thank God and turn to Him that He may increase you therein.” Then he mentioned ten of them: conviction (yaqin), contentment (qina’ah), patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), mildness (hilm), geniality (husn al-khulq), generosity (sakha’), sense of honor (ghayrah), courage (shajaah), magnanimity (muru’ah).(١)

This tradition has been transmitted through several chains (turuq), except that rida (satisfaction), instead of hilm,(٢) occurs in the citation from the Ma’ani al-’akhbar. In al-Wafi, this tradition has been cited with a slightly different wording from al-Kafi.(٣)

عَنِ المَجَالِسِ بإسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَكَارِمِ الأَخْلاقِ فَإنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُحِبُّهُمَا وَإيَّاكُمْ وَمَذَامَّ الأَفْعَالِ فَإنَّ اللهَ يَبْغُضُهَا إلَى أَنْ قَالَ: وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِحُسْنِ الخُلُقِ فَإنَّهُ يَبْلُغُ بِصَاحِبِهِ دَرَجَهَ الصَّائِمِ القَائِمِ... الحديث.

In al-Majalis (al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Ja’far ibn Muhammad (A) that he said, “Acquire moral virtues, for, verily, God loves them, and beware of blameworthy conduct for God hates it” “Accustom yourselves to fairness of disposition, for it raises one who possesses it to the rank of those who fast (perpetually) and stand

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١- Al-Khisal, vol. ii, p. ٤٣١, bab ١٠, hadith ١٢.

٢- Ma’ani al-’akhbar, p. ١٩١, “bab fi makarim al-akhlaq,” hadith ٣.

٣- Al-Wafi, vol. iv, p. ٢٦٤, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab jawami’ al-makarim,” hadith ٢.

(in prayer (through the night, constantly)”(١)

الكَافِي بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّ أَكْمَلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أيمَاناً أَحْسَنُهُمْ أخْلاقاً.

In al-Kafi (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja’far (A) that he said, “Among believers the most perfect in faith is the one who is the most fairly disposed amongst (them.”(٢)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَا يُوضَعُ فِی مِيزَانِ امْرِئٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) that he said: The) Messenger of Allah (S) said, “There will be nothing superior to fairness of disposition in (the balance of a person’s works on the Day of Resurrection.”(٣)

:Also, the Prophet (S) has said

Of all qualities) that which will take most of my ummah to paradise is God-fearing) ((taqwa) and a fair disposition.(۴)

:And Imam al-Sadiq (A) said

Verily, virtuousness and fairness of disposition make homes flourish and extend the (spans of lives.(۵)

:He also said

Verily, God, the Exalted and the Blessed, rewards a servant for his fair disposition in a measure equal to what He grants to someone who fights day and night in the way of (God.(۶)

There are many traditions on this subject. In the same way as good nature and fairness of disposition lead to the perfection of faith, add to the weight of one’s deeds in the Balance, and take one into paradise, so also ill- naturedness, on the contrary, corrupts one’s faith and subjects one to Divine chastisement, as pointed out in

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, al-Amali, majlis ۵۷; Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol. xi, p. ۱۵۶, “kitab al-jihad,” “abwab jihad al-nafs,” bab ۶, hadith ۸.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۹۹, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۱.

۳- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۹۹, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۲.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۹۹, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۶.

۵- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۹۹, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۸.

۶- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۹۹, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۱۲.

:the sacred traditions

الكَافِى بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ سُوءَ الخُلُقِ لَيُفْسِدُ الإيمَانَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الخَلُّ العَسَلَ.

In al-Kafi (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) that he said, “Verily, ill-naturedness destroys one’s faith in the same way as vinegar destroys (honey (on being mixed with it).”(١)

It is mentioned in another tradition that ill-naturedness destroys one’s works in the way vinegar destroys honey.(٢) It is narrated from the Messenger of God (S) that God does not accept the repentance of an ill-natured person. When asked about its reason, he replied, “That is because as soon as he repents for a sin, he falls into a sin (worse than the earlier one.”(٣)

It is stated in a tradition that one who becomes ill-natured subjects himself thereby to Divine chastisement.(۴) It is evident that ill-nature continually torments one who possesses it and is the cause of hardship, darkness, and adversity in the next phases of life, as mentioned in some of the traditions cited. And all praise is God’s, at every .beginning and end

Thirtieth Hadith: The Kinds of Hearts

point

بِسَنَدِى المُتَّصِلِ إلى ثِقَهِ الإسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الْكُلَيْنِى عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ هَارُونَ بْنِ الجَهْمِ عَنِ المُفَضَّلِ عَنْ سَعْدٍ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ القُلُوبَ أَرْبَعَهٌ: قَلْبٌ فِيهِ نِفَاقٌ وَإيمَانٌ، وَقَلْبٌ مَنْكُوسٌ، وَقَلْبٌ مَطْبُوعٌ، وَقَلْبٌ أَزْهَرُ أَجْرَدُ. فَقُلْتُ: مَا الأَزْهَرُ؟ قَالَ: فِيهِ كَهَيْئَهِ السِّرَاجِ. فَأَمَّا المَطْبُوعُ فَقَلْبُ المُنَافِقِ، وَأَمَّا الأَزْهَرُ فَقَلْبُ المُؤْمِنِ إنْ أَعْطَاهُ شَكَرَ وَإنِ ابْتَلاهُ صَبَرَ. وَأَمَّا المَنْكُوسُ فَقَلْبُ

١- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ٩٩, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ٣.
٢- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ٩٩, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ١.
٣- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ٩٩, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ٢.
۴- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ٩٩, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab husn al-khulq,” hadith ۴.

الْمُشْـرِكِ. ثُمَّ قَرَأَ هَـٰذِهِ الآيَهَ: (أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِـى مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْشِـى سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِـرَاطٍ مُسْـتَقِيم.) فَأَمَّا الْقَلْبُ الَّذِى فِيهِ إِيمَانٌ وَنِفَاقٌ فَهُمْ قَوْمٌ كَانُوا بِالطَّائِفِ فَإِنْ أَدْرَكَ أَحَدَهُمْ أَجَلُهُ عَلَى نِفَاقِهِ هَلَكَ، وَإِنْ أَدْرَكَهُ عَلَى إِيمَانِهِ نَجَا.

With my continuous chain of transmission reaching up to the Thiqat al- Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from a group of our companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from his father, from Harun ibn al-Jahm, from al-Mufaddal, from Sa'd, from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "Verily, the hearts are [of] four (kinds) the heart that has [both] faith and hypocrisy in it, the heart that is inverted and upside down, the heart that has been sealed and is darkened, the heart that is clear and luminous (al-azhar)." [Sa'd], the narrator, says, "I asked him, "What is meant by 'al-azhar'?"

He replied, "it is a heart that has the likeness of a lamp. As to the heart that has been sealed, it is the heart of a hypocrite. The heart that is luminous is that of the believer, who is thankful when God gives him and is patient when subjected to tribulation. As to the heart that is inverted, it is the heart of the polytheist." Then he recited this verse: What, is he who walks prone upon his face better guided or he who walks upright on a straight path? (۶۷:۲۲) [Then he added]; "As to the heart wherein is faith and hypocrisy- they were a people who lived in

Ta'if; so if one of them should die in the state of hypocrisy, he would perish, and (should he die in the state of faith he would attain salvation."(١)

Exposition

:Mankus means 'inverted' (maqlub). [The lexicographers] explain

نَكَستُ الشَّيءَ أنْكُسهُ نَكساً: قَلَبتُه عَلى رأسِهِ.

الولد ,i.e. 'I inverted something' or 'I put it means upside down'). According to al-Sihah) الـذى يخرج رجلاه قبل) means a baby whose feet (at birth) come out before its head المنكوس in the noble verse cited by the مكباً على وجهه Closely associated is the meaning of .(رأسه Imam, for ikbab means falling on one's face, and therein is a figurative indication of the fact that the hearts of the polytheists (mushrikun) are inverted and their course of spiritual movement is other than the Straight Path, as will be elaborated later on, God .willing

Matbu' means 'sealed' (makhtum), and tab' with sukun (of the ba'), means 'sealing' (khatm), and with its harakah (i.e. taba') means impurity (danas, wasakh). If it be taken in the sense of 'sealed,' it would figuratively mean that the word of truth and Divine truths do not enter such a heart and it does not accept them-not that God, the Exalted, deprives it of His special grace, although this sense is also true. However the .aforementioned sense is more appropriate

Azhar' means 'white' (abyad) and 'luminous' (mustanir), as mentioned in al-' Nihayah.(٢) According to a!-Sihah 'azhar' means 'bright' (nayyir), and the moon is called azhar. Ibn al-Sikkit says: al-azharan means the sun and the moon. Azhar [when

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Usul al-Kafi, vol. II, p. ٤٢٢, "kitab al-Iman wa al-kufr" "bab fi Zulmah qalb al-munafiq" -١ .hadith ٢

.Al-Nihayah, vol. ii, p. ٣٢١, under z.h.r -٢

spoken of a man] means a white man, of a bright face, and such a woman is Zahra'. To sum up, azhar means luminous and white; hence the sun and moon are called azharan; a white and luminous man is called azhar and a white and luminous women .'is Zahra

Ajrad' is someone who has no hair on his body, and according to al-Sihah, al-jurd' means a treeless (open) space. And this figuratively implies the absence of attachment to the world, or freedom from impurity and defilement. We shall expound that which needs explication in this noble tradition in the course of a preface and a .few sections

Reforming The Heart

It should be known that the term 'heart' has various meanings in the terminology of the Shari'ah, and that of philosophy and 'irfan. To discuss that and the related terminological differences, as well as the ranks and degrees of the hearts, is outside the scope of this discourse and is not very beneficial for us. Therefore, it would be better to take the matter in its unexplicated simplicity, as is done in the noble tradition, .and discuss that which is important and essential for us

It should be known that the endeavor to reform the 'heart,' on whose wholesomeness and corruption depends one's felicity and wretchedness, is more essential than an inquiry into its meanings and delving into the technical jargon.(۱) In fact, it often happens that intense attention to terms and preoccupation with words and that which relates to them make one totally oblivious

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۱ - Author's Note. It should be known that that which is meant here is not that the science of ethics and the things which lead to the salvation and damnation of the soul are not necessary. Rather, what is meant it that that science is to considered as a mere preliminary to action, not as something of independent worth is whose pursuit and in collecting whose technical jargon one should spend a lifetime and be kept from .one's real goal

.of the heart and its reform

As a result] one may acquire complete mastery in expounding the meaning and] essence of the heart and the terminology of the metaphysicians (hukama') and the mystics ('urafa) while one's heart, na'udhubillah, is one that is either inverted or sealed, like someone who knows well the beneficial and harmful properties of medicines and is able to describe them with expertise without himself refraining from poisonous medicines or making use of the beneficial ones. Such a person perishes .despite all his knowledge of pharmacology, which is unable to rescue him

We said earlier(۱) that all the sciences are absolutely practical and even the transcendental sciences have a practical aspect in them. Here that which we have to say is that the science of the states of the heart and that which relates to their health and sickness, reform and corruption, is something which is purely a preliminary step to action and the way of its reform and remedy. Its mere knowledge and understanding is not considered a human perfection. Hence one's main attention and goal should be the reform and refinement of the heart so that one may attain to .ultimate spiritual felicity and to the higher transcendent stations

And even if one were well adept in the sciences, the subtleties and the realities, during the course of his journey through 'the horizons and the souls', his main concern should be the discovery of his own spiritual states, so that if it were ruinous he should

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۱- See under the exposition of Twenty-sixth Hadith.

try to remedy it, and if oriented towards salvation, try to make it complete and .perfect

The Basis for The Classification Of The Hearts

One should know that this classification of the hearts made in this noble tradition is one that is non-detailed and general. Every heart has a different rank and degree, whether it is from the viewpoint of shirk and hypocrisy or that of faith and perfection. Apparently, this classification of the hearts is subsequent to acquisition and spiritual conduct, not one based on the nature and constitution of different souls, so as to conflict with traditions concerning fitrah, which state that all people are born with the nature of tawhid and that shirk and hypocrisy are accidental [and not innate in human .[nature

However, even if it were on the basis of nature, that would be correct in accordance with one explanation which removes the contradiction and does not lead to .predestination, which is something impossible

Nevertheless, that which is closer to metaphysical proof and more conducive to education is the first probability. And we said earlier(١) that as long as man remains in this world, which is the source of the tree of primal matter with its substantial, formal, and accidental changes and transformations, he can deliver himself from all levels of deficiency, wretchedness, shirk, and hypocrisy and attain to the higher levels of perfection and spiritual felicity. And this is not contrary to the famous hadith that :states

الشَّقِيُّ شَقِيٌّ فِى بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ.

(The wretched one is wretched in his mother's womb.(٢

for the meaning of the

.See Seventeenth Hadith -١

٢ - Bihar al-anwar, vol. v, p. ١٥٣, “kitab al adl wa al-ma’ad’ “bab al-sa’adah wa al-shaqawah” hadith ١, with a slight difference in wording.

tradition is not that felicity and wretchedness are innate and incapable of change. Rather, this tradition accords with metaphysical proof, which has been set forth in clarity in its proper place, that wretchedness is derived from deficiency and non-being, and that felicity derives from being and its perfection.

That which belongs to the immaculate tree of being is the sacred Divine Being in accordance with the ranks of causes and means-which is the way of the best of the latter generations and the most perfect of the early ones, the Nasir of the millah and din, i.e. Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (Q) or on the basis of manifesting and being manifested (zahiriyyah and mazhariyyah), unity and multiplicity-which is the way of the greatest of philosophers, Hadrat Sadr al-Muta'allihin. And that which derives from deficiency and non-being pertains to the vicious tree of quiddity, which is not the object of creation because of its being below creation (ja'l).

It may be said that the when the noble tradition says that felicity and wretchedness accompany one in the 'mother's womb' that which is meant is the world of corporeal nature ('alam al-tabiyyat) which is the absolute mother, the womb and the cradle wherein nature nurtures its offsprings. That is, the expression 'mother's womb' is not to be taken in its ordinary sense, because felicity, being perfection and actuality, cannot belong to the primal souls (nafus al-hayuliyyah) except potentially.

Since the literal import is that the felicitous are felicitous in act in the mother's

womb, the contrary of the literal meaning has to be adopted. And since that which has been said is in accordance with metaphysical proofs, the noble tradition has to be interpreted solely in this sense or something equivalent to it. In any case any elaboration of this matter and discussion of its proof is outside the scope of this .discourse, though at times the pen rebels and runs contrary to the set aim

The Reason Why the Kinds of Hearts Are Confined To the Four

Some [scholars] have said that the reason for confining the kinds of hearts to four is that the hearts either possess faith or they don't. In the first case, the faith possessed pertains to all that the Messenger has brought or only to a part of that. The first is the heart of the believer (mu'min) and the second is a heart wherein faith and hypocrisy are both present. In the second case, there is either an outward confession of faith or there isn't. The first is the heart of the hypocrite and the second that of a polytheist .((mushrik

This interpretation does not accord with the noble tradition, which implies that at times there is real faith in all that the Prophet (S) has brought and at times there is hypocrisy. Hence, if one were forced to interpret, it would be better to say that the .heart either has faith in all that the Prophet (S) has brought or it doesn't

In the second case, there is either a pretence of faith or there isn't. In the first

case, the faith is either stable and established in it or [it is unstable], believing at one time and disbelieving at other times, making a pretense of belief in the state of disbelief also. The concluding part of the tradition shows that the repentance of those who apostatize after belief, to revert to unbelief and hypocrisy, is accepted, even if it .should occur repeatedly

In another tradition of the noble al-Kafi, Imam Baqir (A) divides the hearts into three kinds: (١) the inverted heart (qalb al-mankus), wherein there is no good; that is an unbeliever's heart; (٢) the heart wherein there is a black spot, in which there is a conflict between good and evil, each of which seek to overcome the other; (٣) the 'open heart' (qalb al-maftuh) wherein are lamps whose lights will not go out until the (Day of Resurrection; that is the heart of the believer.(١

This [division] does not conflict with the noble tradition [under exposition], for the first category mentioned in the above tradition includes the two kinds mentioned by the hadith, that is, the hearts of the polytheist and the hypocrite. That is because the hearts of all those three groups (i.e. unbelievers, polytheists and hypocrites) are inverted, and no inconsistency would be involved if inversion be [considered] the salient characteristic of the hearts of an unbeliever and polytheist and being seated the salient characteristic of the hypocrite's heart, and accordingly each of them is .ascribed to either of them in the tradition

The States of The Hearts

We shall

Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۴٢٣, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr" "bab Zulmah qalb al-munafiq" - ١ .hadith ٣

begin with the believer's heart so that the state of the other hearts be known in contrast. It should be known that in the transcendental sciences and the true teachings it has been clearly established that the reality of 'being' is the reality of 'light.' These two terms signify one simple reality without being attributable to any separate multiple aspects. It is also known that that which pertains to perfection and .completion derives from being itself

This is one of the noble principles, and to anyone who has the honor to apprehend it the door to the higher teaching is opened. Our feeble spirits are unable to apprehend the reality of that Being without a help from the Hidden and a success predestined from eternity. It is also known that faith in God belongs to the category of knowledge and is one of the absolute perfections. Hence, being a perfection, it belongs to being itself and the reality of light and manifestation. And that which is other than faith and all that relates to it, is outside the category of the perfections of the human spirit, .belonging to the darkness of non-being and quiddity

The Luminosity of the Believer's Heart

Hence it is known that the 'believer's heart is luminous. It is narrated in the noble al-Kafi from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he said, "You see some people who are so perfect in eloquence that they don't err in [the use of a single letter like] lam or waw, while their hearts are darker than a gloomy

night, and there are some people who cannot express what is in their hearts, yet their heart is radiant like a lamp."(۱) Further, the believer's heart is on the Straight Path and his spiritual movement is on the middle path of humanity. That is because, firstly, he has not deserted his primal divine nature, fashioned in forty days by God, the Exalted, .with the hands of His Beauty and Glory

Thus, he walks on the path of the nature of tawhid, oriented towards absolute perfection and consummate beauty. Inevitably, this spiritual movement from the plane of innate nature to the ultimate point of absolute perfection is without any crookedness, being as it is the path of spiritual rectitude and the middle inner way. However, all other hearts deviate from nature and the straight path. It is narrated of the Noblest Messenger (S) that he drew a straight line on the ground drawing other lines on its either side. Then he said, "This one, the straight and middlemost line, is my (path."(۲

Explanation of the Believer's Being on the Straight Path

Secondly, the believer is the follower of the Perfect Man, and since the Perfect Man is the manifestation of all the Names and the Attributes and subject to the Lordship of the Truth, the Exalted, by virtue of the All inclusive Name (ism al-jami), his being is not .monopolized by anyone of the Names

Like his Lord, he is an all-inclusive being and in him, the manifestation of any of the .Names is not overshadowed by that of any other Name

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. ۴۲۲, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr" "bab Zulmah qalb al-munafiq"
hadith ۱: عَنْ عَمْرٍو عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ لَنَا ذَاتَ یَوْمٍ: یَجِدُ الرَّجُلَ لا یُخْطِئُ بِلامٍ وَلا وَاوٍ، خَطِیباً مُصْقِعاً، لَقَلْبُهُ أَشَدُّ ظُلْمَةً مِنَ اللَّیْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ. وَتَجِدُ الرَّجُلَ لا یَسْتَطِیعُ یُعَبِّرُ عَمَّا فِی قَلْبِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ، وَقَلْبُهُ یَزْهَرُ کَمَا یَزْهَرُ الْمِصْبَاحُ.
۲- Sadr al-Muta'allihin, Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim, vol. iv, p. ۵۲, exegesis of ۲:۲۵۶ (ayat al-Kursi); See also al-Majlisi, 'Ilm al-yaqin, vol. ii, p. ۹۶۷.

He possesses the station of middleness (maqam al-wasafiyyat) and the major mediation (barzakhiyyat al-kubra). Hence, his movement is along the straight and .middlemost path of the All-inclusive Name

All other beings are dominated by one of the encompassing or non- encompassing Names of which they are manifestations. Their origin and return is from and to that Name. The Name opposite to it is latent in it and plays no active role in it except from the aspect of the unity of all the Names-something whose explanation is not appropriate here. Hence God, the Exalted, at the station of the All-inclusive Name and :the Lord of Man (rabb al-insan), is on the Straight Path, as He says

(إِنَّ رَبِّی عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.)

(Verily my Lord is on the Straight Path. (۱۱:۵۶

That means the station of middleness and all-inclusiveness (jami'iyyat) without the predominance of an Attribute over another and without the manifestation of one Name rather than that of another. A being subject to the Lordship of that Sacred Being at this station is also on the Straight Path, without any station or aspect .overshadowing another station or aspect

Hence [the believer] in the course of his real upward ascension [i.e. prayer] and the ultimate point of proximity [to the Divine], after making an admission of servitude, after referring every worship and service by every worshipper to that Sacred Essence and ascribing all help in all stations of expansiveness and straits (qabd wa bast) :exclusively to that Sacred Being, by declaring

(إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ.)

Thee only

(we worship and Thee only we ask for help. (۱:۵

:says

(اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

(.

(Guide us to the Straight Path. (۱:۶

This is the same path as that of the Lord of the Perfect Man, the former from the [active] aspect of manifesting (zahirriyyat) and Lordship (rububiyyat) and the latter from the [passive] aspect of being manifested [mazhariyyat] and creaturehood [marbubiyyat]. None of the other existents and beings in movement towards Allah are on the Straight Path, but are deviant, inclining either towards (Divine) Grace and .Beauty or towards Might and Glory

The faithful (mu'minin), since they are followers of the Perfect Man and walk in his footsteps, they journey by the light of his guidance and the lamp of his knowledge .(ma'rifah) in submission to the sacred being of the Perfect Man

They don't take any step by themselves and do not allow their intellect to meddle with the character of the spiritual journey towards Allah. For this reason, their path is also straight, and in the company of the Perfect Man their fulfillment (wusal) is subordinate to the fulfillment of the Perfect Man, provided that they protect their clear hearts from the workings of the devils, the ego, and egoism, and submit themselves totally in the .journey to the Perfect Man and the station of ultimate prophecy

Some Stratagems Of Satan

One of the evil workings of Satan is to make man turn the face of his heart away from the Straight Path and towards some coquettish person (shukh) or guru (shaykh). One of the great masterpieces

of Satan, who whispers into the hearts of men, is that he, with gay and nonchalant discourse and deceptive manipulations, makes some spiritual gurus (shuyukh) enamored to some coquette, justifying this major sin, or an act of spiritual polytheism, on the pretext that if the heart were to have a singular attachment one can succeed .faster in curtailing worldly attachments

At [other] times he turns some mindless coquette towards some demonic guru, one who seduces people or is rather a satanic highwayman. The pretext offered for this act of explicit polytheism (shirk al-jali) is that the guru is a Perfect Man and that only through the Perfect Man, one can attain to the realm of absolute transcendence, .which is not manifested except in the mirror of the guru

At the end of their lives, the two of them-that one with the memory of his favorite's cheek and this one with the inverted face of his guru-join the world of demons and Satans, and neither the former gets rid of his bestial attachment nor the latter .reaches the goal through this blind alley

It should be known that since the believer's journey is on a Straight Path and his heart is upright, his orientation is towards Allah and his way is the middle path. As a result, in that world too his path is clear and straight, his posture upright, and his appearance .and character, his inward and outward, have a human form and shape

One can understand the character of the

heart of the polytheists in contrast to this. As his heart deviates from the Divine nature, and strays from the central point of perfection and the hub of light and beauty, departing from submission to the absolute Guide and Guardian (Wali) and preoccupied with its own ego and egoism, the world and its ornaments, consequently in the other worlds also it is not resurrected with the straight human character and .form but in the form of an animal with a head turned about

That is so because, in that world, form and shape are subject to the character of the heart and the outward reflects the inward and the shell is the image of the kernel. The matter of that realm is not averse to accepting the inward malakuti forms as in this .world, and this thesis has been established in its proper place

Hence the hearts which are averse to the Truth and Reality and deviate from straight nature, oriented and directed as they are towards the world, their image too, like themselves, deviates from straightness, being inverted, facing the world and physical nature (tabi'at), which is the lowest of the low. Perhaps, in that world some would walk on their faces with their feet upwards, some on their bellies, and some on their hands :and feet, like animals, the way they in fact walked in this world

(أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِى مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْشِى سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.)

Is he who goes inverted on his face more rightly guided

(or he who walks upright on a straight path?(١)

It is possible that this metaphor in the metaphoric world becomes a reality in the realm of reality and manifestation of spirituality. In some noble traditions relating to the exegesis of this noble verse, the 'Straight Path' is interpreted as referring to :(Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin and the Infallible Imams (A

عَنِ الكَافِي بإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبي الحسن الماضي عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: (أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيم.) قَالَ: إنَّ الله ضَرَبَ مَثَلاً مَنْ حَادَ عَنْ وِلايَةِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ كَمَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى وَجْهِهِ لا يَهْتَدِي لأَمْرِهِ. وَجَعَلَ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ سَوِيّاً عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ. وَالصِّرَاطُ المُسْتَقِيمُ أَمِيرُ المُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu al-Hasan al-Madhi (Imam Musa al-Kazim) that Muhammad bin al-Fudayl says: When asked concerning the meaning of the verse, "Is he who goes inverted on his face more rightly guided or he who walks upright on a straight path?" the Imam replied, "Verily, God has struck a similitude [in this verse]: one who deviates from the wilayah of 'Ali (A) is like one who walks on his face and is not guided, and He has made one who follows him as one who walks (upright on a straight path, and 'the Straight Path' is Amir al-Mu'minin (A)."(٢

In another tradition, the 'Straight Path' is explained as meaning 'Ali (A) and the rest of (the Imams (A).(٣

Also, it is narrated in the noble al-Kafi from Fudayl that he said, "I entered

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١- ٦٧:٢٢

٢- Al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ٤٣٢, "Kitab al-hujjah" "bab fihi nukat wa nutaf min al-tamzil fi al- .Wilayah" hadith ٩١

٣- Bihar al-anwar, vol. XXIV, p. ١٥, "kitab Imamah" bab ٢٤, hadith ١٧: عَنْ حَمْرَانَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ (عَنْ) قَوْلِ اللهِ تَعَالَى: (وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ.) قَالَ: عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَالأَئِمَّةُ مِنْ وِلْدِ فَاطِمَةَ هُمْ صِرَاطُ اللهِ. فَمَنْ أَبَاهُمْ سَلَكَ السُّبُلَ.

the Holy Mosque (of Makkah) with Imam al-Baqir (A) and he was leaning upon me. Then he threw his blessed glance upon the people as we stood at the Door of Bani Shaybah. Then he said, 'O Fudayl, they used to circumambulate in this manner [even] during the days of the Jahiliyyah!

They neither recognized any truth nor followed any creed. O Fudayl, look at them, they walk inverted on their faces! May God damn them, they are a disfigured creation walking on their faces." Then he recited the noble verse, Is he who goes inverted on his face more rightly guided or he who walks upright on a straight path. Then he added, "By God, that means 'Ali (A) and his awsiya' (A)."(١)

In the foregoing, we have explained how the journey and the movement of the Perfect Man are on the Straight Path. However, the exposition of the matter that the Perfect Man is the Straight Path itself is beyond our purpose in this discourse.

The Hypocrite's Heart And The Difference Between It And The Believer's Heart

The states of the heart of the believer and the polytheist-and even that of the unbeliever-became known from the exposition in the foregoing section. A comparison also discloses the state of the hypocrite's heart. That is because the believer's heart has nor departed from its original innocent and clear nature and it naturally accepts any truths relating to faith and the true teaching. The harmony and compatibility between the nourishment-which consists of the truths and the teachings-and the nourished one-which is the heart in its

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١- Rawdat al-Kafi, p. ٢٨٨, hadith ٤٣٤: عَنِ الفُضَيْلِ قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ مَعَ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ المَسْجِدَ الحَرَامَ وَمُتَّكِئً عَلَيَّ فَنَظَرَ إلَى النَّاسِ وَنَحْنُ عَلَى بَابِ بَنِى شَيْبَهَ فَقَالَ: يَا فُضَيْلُ، هَكَذَا كَانَ يَطَّوَّفُونَ فِى الجَاهِلِيَّهِ! لا يَعْرِفُونَ حَقّاً وَلا يَدِينُونَ دِيناً! يَا فُضَيْلُ، أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْهِمْ مُكِبِّينَ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ، لَعَنَهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ خَلْقٍ مَسْخُورٍ بِهِمْ مُكِبِّينَ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ. ثُمَّ تَلا هَـذِهِ الآيَهَ: (أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِى مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْشِى سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.) يَعْنِى وَاللهِ عِلِيّاً عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ وَالأَوْصِيَاءَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ.

.state of original nature–is preserved

Hence in another tradition of the noble al-Kafi, the believer's heart has been said to be 'open' (maftuh), and although this 'opening' may refer to one of the 'threefold .openings' (futhat al-thalathah),(۱) this meaning is also appropriate

However, as the hypocrite's heart has obscurities and darkness formed in it contrary to the human nature, such as ignorant prejudices (ta'assubhaye jahiliyyat), blameworthy moral traits, vanity, ambition, and other qualities contrary to the [primal] nature, it is closed and sealed. It is not at all receptive to the word of truth and its tablet is like a page of paper that is totally blackened, on which nothing can be inscribed. Its pretense of religiosity, arising from its satanic character, is a means to .secure worldly benefit and advancement in mundane matters

It should be known that the hearts of the polytheist and the hypocrite are both inverted and sealed, as is clear and evident. But the attribution of one of these qualities to each of them in particular is for the reason that, as the hearts of the polytheists are turned in worship towards other than That which is Absolute Perfection, they have two properties and characteristics: one is sincere humility [in front of the object of worship] and another is the deficiency and obfuscation created .by this humility, which is diverted towards imperfect beings and creatures

Hence, their hearts are inverted and this is their predominant characteristic. As to the hypocrite, he is either a polytheist in reality

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۱- These are; al-fath al-qarib, al-fath al-mubin, and al-fath al-mutlaq.

and in this respect he shares equally with the polytheists the quality of inversion of- the heart- besides possessing an additional quality [i.e. hypocrisy], or he is an unbeliever in reality and possesses no religiosity.

Although his heart too is inverted, it has another quality, which is predominant. That additional quality is his outward pretense of following the truth. He enters the congregation of the followers of the Truth and hears all the truthful preaching that is heard by the believers. Yet, while the believer absorbs them due to his inner purity and open heart, the hypocrite fails to receive them due to the darkness and obscurities of his heart, which is closed and sealed.

The reason for singling out for mention from among the attributes of the believer the two characteristics, of gratitude on being favored with gifts and patience in trials is the salient character of these two among the believer’s qualities. These are two of the major virtues from which other virtues branch out, and we have alluded to this in the exposition of some of the earlier traditions.(۱)

Further, the tradition refers to two of the Divine Attributes, of Glory and Beauty, or Might and Grace, each of which is manifested in the condition of tribulation and the condition of being well provided. And although tribulation belongs to the Attributes of Grace, but since it manifests through Might, it is reckoned as belonging to it, as mentioned in the discussions on Divine Names and Attributes. The believer

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۱- See Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Twenty-first Hadith.

.always observes the duties of servitude between the two manifestations

Neglect Of The Truth Results In The Inversion Of The Heart

From the foregoing discussion it is known that the souls, though they should have belief in God and Resurrection, become inverted if they are totally absorbed by attention towards the world and preoccupied with mundane advancements while being neglectful of God. The criterion in respect of the inversion of the heart is the .neglect of God and attention to the world and its cultivation

Such belief is either not faith, as mentioned in the exposition of some of the earlier traditions,(١) or is an insignificant and inadequate faith that is not inconsistent with the inversion of the heart. In fact, one who makes a pretense of belief in transcendence and Resurrection but has no trepidation arising from such a belief and whom this belief does not lead to act with his bodily members, such a one is to be considered as belonging to the hypocrites, not as one of the believers. Possibly this sort of apparent believers, like the people of Ta'if, who in the noble tradition are mentioned as being typical of those who are believers at one time and hypocrites at another time, may altogether lose this hollow faith which has no sovereignty in the realm of their .(physical, bodily existence (mulk

They might leave this world in a state of complete hypocrisy to be resurrected amongst the hypocrites. This is one of the crucial matters to which our weak spirits must attach great importance, taking care that the

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١- See Ninth, Twentieth and Twenty-sixth Hadith.

effects of faith become established in our manifest and hidden, inner, and outer, being. In the same way as we claim to possess faith in the heart, we should make our outward being also subject to its authority, so that the roots of faith become established in our hearts, not to be destroyed by any kind of obstacle or hindrance, transformation and change, so that this Divine trust of a celestial and pure heart, fashioned with its Divine nature, is returned to the Sacred Being unaffected and unsoiled by the workings of Satan and hands of treachery. And to Allah belongs all ‘ .praise, at every beginning and end

Thirty–First Hadith: The Indescribability of God, The Prophet, And The Imams

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الجَلِيلِ أَفْضَلِ المُحَدِّثِينَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الْكُلَيْنِيِّ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ حَمَّادٍ عَنْ رِبْعِيٍّ عَنْ زُرَارَهَ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لا يُوصَفُ وَكَيْفَ يُوصَفُ وَقَالَ فِى كِتَابِهِ: (وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ.) فَلا يُوصَفُ بِقَدَرٍ إِلّا كَانَ أَعْظَمَ مِنْ ذَلِك. وَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لا يُوصَفُ وَكَيْفَ يُوصَفُ عَبْدٌ احْتَجَبَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِسَبْعٍ وَجَعَلَ طَاعَتَهُ فِى الأَرْضِ كَطَاعَتِهِ [فِى السَّمَاءِ] فَقَالَ: (وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.) وَمَنْ أَطَاعَ هَذَا فَقَدْ أَطَاعَنِى وَمَنْ عَصَاهُ فَقَدْ عَصَانِى، وَفَوَّضَ إِلَيْهِ. وَإِنَّا لا نُوصَفُ وَكَيْفَ يُوصَفُ قَوْمٌ رَفَعَ اللهُ عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْسَ، وَهُوَ الشَّكُّ. وَالمُؤْمِنُ لا يُوصَفُ وَإِنَّ المُؤْمِنَ لَيَلْقَى أَخَاهُ فَيُصَافِحُهُ فَلا يَزَالُ اللهُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمَا وَالذُّنُوبُ تَتَحَاتُّ عَنْ وُجُوهِهِمَا كَمَا يَتَحَاتُّ الوَرَقُ عَنِ الشَّجَرِ.

With my continuous chain of transmission reaching the august

shaykh, the best of the traditionists, Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni, from ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from Hammed, from Rib’i, from Zurarah, from Abu Ja’far (A), [Zurarah] says: I heard him say, “Verily, God, the Almighty and the Glorious, cannot be described, and how could He be described when He declares in His Book. ‘And they measure not God with His true measure.’(١) Hence, He cannot be described by any measure, and if described He would transcend it. And, verily, the Prophet (S) cannot be described, and how could be described a servant whom God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has concealed with seven veils and made obedience to him in the earth like obedience to him in the heavens, declaring, ‘And whatsoever the Messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever be forbiddeth, abstain from it.’(٢) And [He has declared] ‘Whoever obeys him assuredly obeys Me, and whoever disobeys him disobeys Me.’(٣) Hence, He has delegated authority to him. And we (Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt) cannot be described, and how could a people be described whom God has kept free from impurity, which is doubt. And neither can the believer be described. And indeed, when the believer takes his brother with the hand on meeting him, God looks at them and sins are shed from their faces in the way leaves fall from a tree.”(۴)

Exposition

To take up the explication of the phrase... وما قدروا ...(and they measure not God...’), al-Jawhari says in this regard: “qadr means ‘measure’. And

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١- The Qur’an, ۶:٩١; ٢٢:٧۴; ٣٩:۶٨.

٢- The Qur’an, ۵٩:٧.

٣- This is a reference to verse ۴:٨٠ of the Qur’an: “Whoso obeyeth the Messenger, obeyeth God.”

۴- Al-Majlisi, Mir’at al-’uqul, vol. ix, p. ٧١, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr” “bab al mussfahah” hadith ١۶.

both with fathah on the dal (i.e. qadar) and sukun on it (i.e. qadr) has the same قدر وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّه meaning. It is a verbal noun (masdar). God, the Exalted, says: which means they do not venerate God in the way He aught'(مَا عَظَّمُوا اللهَ حَقَّ تعظِيمِه which means حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ".('to be venerated

In the opinion of this writer qadr apparently means 'measure,' and has been used figuratively to indicate the incapacity to describe and venerate adequately. Description (tawsif) itself is a kind of measurement of the object described in the apparel of characterization, and this-as shall be pointed out later, God willing-is .neither possible nor permissible for anyone else to do in relation to that Sacred Being

with a ta, in the version of marhum al-Majlisi ,بِقُدْرَهٍ there is فلا يوصف بقدر As to the phrase (M) and he has considered it to signify comparison. Also, he is of the opinion that the singling out of Power (qudrah) from among the Attributes is due to its being closer to understanding. Then, affirming the possibility of error in the manuscript, he says, ".“Possibly, it may be read with fathah (i.e. qadar), as in some other traditions

with ha', in قَدَرِهِ The version of al-Wafi accords with his guess(١) and perhaps it may be with ta', is an error in بِقُدْرَهٍ some manuscripts. But it is probable, or rather certain, that the manuscript, for it is neither eloquent from the viewpoint of meaning nor proper on ,the basis of wording

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١- Al-Fayd al-Kashani, al-Wafi, vol, v, p. ۶١٣.

for a masculine pronoun is referred to it, and to explain it away will be contrary to the .rule

The context offered little room for a maneuver and hence this explanation of marhum al-Majlisi, even though there is no reason for asserting that while it is possible to conceive the attribute of Power it is impossible to conceive other Attributes, thus distinguishing it from other Attributes. Accordingly this explanation did carry much .weight in his own blessed opinion

i.e. hatt means الحتّ: حكّک الورق من الغصنِ :as Jawhari says in the Sihah تَحاتُّ As to the word which (i.e. تَحاتَّ الشّیءُ: تَناثَرَ :the falling of leaves from the branch of a tree. He further says tanathur) also gives the meaning of falling and scattering. Now we shall explain the .relevant points of the noble tradition in a number of sections

The Indescribability Of God

It should be known that the indescribability of God, the Exalted, mentioned in this tradition refers to the characteristics of God given by some victims of ignorance and disputation from among the theologians (mutakallimun) and others, whose statements implied finitude (tahdid) and anthropomorphism (tashbih) or rather the very denial of the Divine Attributes (tatil). That such is the case is indicated by this Some traditions of the noble al-Kafi, in .وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّه حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ,phrase in the noble tradition the chapter concerning prohibition on characterization (nahy 'an al tawsif), also affirm :this

بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَبْدِالرَّحِيمِ بْنِ عَتِيَک القَصِيرِ قَالَ: کَتَبْتُ عَلَی یَدَیْ عَبْدِالمَلِکَ بْنِ أَعْیُنَ إلَی أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: أنَّ قَوْماً

بِالعِرَاقِ يَصِفُونَ اللهَ بِالصُّورَهِ وَبِالتَّخْطِيطِ، فَإِنْ رَأَيْت - جَعَلَنِیَ اللهُ فِدَاکَ - أَنْ تَکْتُبَ إِلَیَّ بِالمَذْهَبِ الصَّحِیحِ مِنَ التَّوْحِیدِ؟ فَکَتَبَ إِلَیَّ: سَأَلْتَ، رَحِمَکَ اللهُ، عَنِ التَّوْحِیدِ وَمَا ذَهَبَ إِلَیْهِ مَنْ قِبَلَکَ فَتَعَالَی اللهُ الَّذِی لَیْسَ کَمِثْلِهِ شَیْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِیعُ البَصِیرُ، تَعَالَی عَمَّا یَصِفُهُ الوَاصِفُونَ المُشَبِّهُونَ اللهَ بِخَلْقِهِ المُفْتَرُونَ عَلَی اللهِ، فَاعْلَمْ، رَحِمَکَ اللهُ، أَنَّ المَذْهَبَ الصَّحِیحَ فِی التَّوْحِیدِ مَا نَزَلَ بِهِ القُرْآنُ مِنْ صِفَاتِ اللهِ جَلَّ وَعَزَّ فَانْفِ عَنِ اللهِ تَعَالَی البُطْلانَ وَالتَّشْبِیهَ. فَلا نَفْیَ وَلا تَشْبِیهَ. هُوَ اللهُ الثَّابِتُ المَوْجودُ، تَعَالَی اللهُ عَمَّا یَصِفُهُ الوَاصِفُونُ، وَلا تَعْدُوا القُرْآنَ فَتَضِلُّوا بَعْدَ البَیَانِ.

In al-Kafi (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn ‘Atik aIl-Qasir that he said: I wrote a letter to Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) which I sent through ‘Abd al-Malik ibn A’yan, informing him that there are some people in Iraq who characterize God with form and features (takhtit). I wrote: May God make me your ransom, if you consider it fit, write to me the correct doctrine of Divine Unity. He wrote back to me, “May God be merciful to you, you have questioned me concerning tawhid and the belief held by a group of people over there. Exalted is God, and there is nothing like Him, and He is the All-hearing and the All-seeing. He is above the descriptions of the anthropomorphists (mushabbihah) who liken God to His creation and ascribe falsehoods to Him. May God have mercy upon you, know that the right doctrine of tawhid is that which has been revealed in the Qur’an

concerning the Attributes of God, the Almighty and the Glorious. Negate ta'til (the negation of Attributes) as well as tashbih in relation to God, the Exalted. Hence neither the Attributes are to be negated, nor God is to be likened to anything. He is God, the Self-Subsisting (al thabit) and the Existent (al-mawjud), exalted is He above what the describers attribute to Him. Go not beyond the Qur'an, or you will go astray after the (clear exposition [of the truth)."(۱)

If one reflects properly on the contents of this noble tradition and its earlier and latter parts one comes to know that the prohibition concerning the characterization of God does not mean, as stated by some eminent traditionists,(۲) that one should refrain absolutely from reflecting on the Attributes or describing the Attributes of God, because this tradition, like some others,(۳) directs one to negate ta'til and tashbih-something which is not possible without reflection on the Attributes and a complete knowledge of them. That which the Imam wants to say is that one should not attribute to God, the Exalted, anything that is not worthy of His sacred Essence, such as the attribution of form, features, and other characteristics of the creatures, which entail imperfection and contingency (imkan), and God is above these.

However, as to describing God, the Exalted, by attributes that suit Him, it has a sound discursive basis in the transcendental sciences ('ulum al-'aliyah). Hence, it is something desirable, and the Book of God, the Sunnah of the Messenger

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۱۰۰, "kitab al-tawhid", "bab al-nahy 'an al-sifah bi ghayr ma wasafah bihi nafsahu ta'ala" hadith ۱.

۲- See al-Majlisi, Mirat al-'uqul, vol. i, p. ۳۴۶, "kitab al-tawhid", "bab nahy 'an al tawsif" hadith ۱.

۳- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-tawhid, p. ۳۱ ff., bab ۲, in particular hadith ۳۷.

S) and the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt are replete with it. The Imam himself has) made a brief reference in this noble tradition to that right discursive approach, though .any elaboration of it is outside the scope of our discussion

As to the statement of Imam al-Sadiq (A) that one should not go beyond the Divine Scripture in one's descriptions of God, it is a prescription for those who are ignorant of the criterion concerning [metaphysical speculation about] the Attributes. It does not mean that it is impermissible to ascribe an attribute that is not mentioned in the Book of God. Accordingly that master, despite prescribing this for his addressee, mentions two Attributes and Names of God, "Self-subsisting" (al-thabit) and "Existent" (al-.mawjud), which as such do not occur in the Divine Scripture

True, if someone with an undeveloped intellect, full of conjectures and imaginings and unilluminated with the light of gnosis (ma'rifah) and hidden Divine assistance, were to describe God with some attribute, he would inevitably fall either into the error of ta'til and negation [of the Attributes] or into the perdition of tashbih. Hence it is essential for persons like us whose hearts are covered with thick veils of ignorance and self-love and perverse habits and dispositions to refrain from reaching out toward the world of the Hidden and abstain from carving out deities for ourselves, for whatever we may .conceive in our imagination would be no more than our own creation

However, it should not remain unsaid that when we

say that such persons should not extend their hand towards the world of the Hidden we do not mean to recommend that they continue to remain in ignorance and egoism, nor, na'udhubillah, we call them to blaspheme His names, [regarding which it has :been said

(وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِی أَسْمَائِهِ.)

(And leave those who blaspheme His Names. (۷:۱۸۰

Nor do we stop them from learning the transcendental teachings (ma'arif) which are the apple of the eye of the awliya' of God and the basis and foundation of religion. Rather, this is itself a call for the removal of these dark curtains, and a warning that as long as man remains a victim of self-attention and the love of the world, a captive of mundane ambition, love of wealth and the self, and, like this author, a prisoner within the walls of nescience, error, egoism and narcissism, which are the thickest of all darkening veils, he would remain deprived from knowing the true teachings (ma'arif) .and attaining to his real goal

If, God forbid, there were no hidden succor from God, the Exalted, and His perfect awliya', one would not know where his matter would ultimately end and to what .destination his movement and journey would lead him

اللَّهُمَّ إِلَيْکَ الْمُشْتَکَی وَأَنْتَ الْمُسْتَعَانُ.

(My God, I address my complaint to Thee and seek Thy help!(۱)

We, wanderers of the realm of ignorance, lost in the wilderness of error, and self-seeking and self-centered amusements, who came into the dark world of mulk and nature and, like bats, did

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.Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, Misbah al-mutahajjid, "Du'a Kumayl," p. ۵۸۷ -۱

not open the eye of real vision to behold the fair reflection of Thy Beauty in the mirror of things, big and small, nor the manifestations of Thy Light throughout the levels of the heavens and the earths! Blind of eyes and insensate of heart, we have passed our days and spent a lifetime in ignorance and self forgetfulness.

Should Thy unbounded grace and Thy infinite and effulgent mercy assist us not by lighting a spark within the heart and infusing a passion within the soul, we would languish forever in this perplexity of ours and get nowhere! But مَا هَکَذَا الظَّنُّ بِکَ -such is not what we expect of Thee!! Thy favors preceded any worthiness [on our behalf) and Thy mercy is [ever] unearned. O God, out of Thy kindness succor us and guide us to the lights of Thy Beauty and Majesty and illuminate our hearts with the radiance of Thy Names and Attributes!

Impossibility Of Knowing The Reality Of The Names And The Attributes

It should be noted that the knowledge of the reality of the Divine Attributes and their encompassment as well as their nature is something whose summits lie beyond the reach of metaphysical proof (burhan) and whose kernel is beyond access to the yearning of the gnostics. That which has been said from the viewpoint of metaphysical proof in the speculative thought of scholars of formal metaphysics or in the discussions of the adept in the terminology of gnosis concerning the Names and the Attributes is correct and well-reasoned in accordance with their approach.

However, learning

ilm) itself is a thick veil, and as long as it is not pierced with the succor of the All-‘) Glorious and in the shadow of perfect piety, intense mortification, complete dedication and sincere supplications to the Lord, the lights of Divine Beauty and Glory do not appear in the wayfarer’s heart, and the heart of the emigrant towards Allah does not succeed in attaining to the witness of the Unseen (mushahedeh-ye ghaybiyyeh) and the manifest presence (hudur-e’ayani) of the manifestation of the .Names and the Attributes, to say nothing of the manifestations of the Essence

These statements should not deter one from research and study, which are themselves reminders of the Truth, for it happens only rarely that the sacred plant of ma’rifah grows and reaches fruition in the heart without the seed of the true sciences and their customary conditions. Hence one should not abstain at the outset from the pursuit of the sciences with due observance of all its prerequisites and auxiliaries, for :it has been said

العُلُومُ بَذْرُ المُشَاهَداتِ.

(The sciences are the seed of (gnostic) disclosures.(١

And should the sciences fail to produce for one a complete result in this world on account of certain obstacles, they would inevitably bring the desired fruits in the other worlds. But the main thing is the observance of their prerequisites and conditions, .some of which were discussed in the exposition of certain foregoing traditions

Knowledge Of The Spiritual Reality Of The Prophets And The Awliya’ Is Unattainable Through Rational Thought

It should be known that the knowledge of the spirituality and the station of perfection of the major prophetic

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Sadr al-Muta’allihin, al-Asfar al-arba’ah, vol ix, p. ١٢٣; see also his Tafsir al-Quran, -١ .the exegesis of ٨٧:١٧

figures and the infallible awliya' (A) in general, and those of the Seal of the Prophets (S) in particular, is not attainable by means of thought or journey through the .('horizons and the souls' (afaq wa anfus; ۴۱:۵۳

That, because those venerable personages belong to the Divine lights of the Unseen and are the complete manifestation and the manifest signs of Divine glory and beauty, having reached, in the spiritual journey towards God, the ultimate extremity of self-annihilation (fana' al-dhati) and the ultimacy of ascent, to the point of 'two bows length or nearer' (qaba qawsayn aw adna; ۵۳:۹), though the latter station belongs [specifically] to the Seal of the Prophets and other wayfarers in their .ascension are followers of his sacred being

Here we do not intend to describe the nature of the journey of that sacred personage and the difference between his spiritual ascent (mi'raj) and the ascents of other prophets and awliya' (A). For the sake of the present discourse we shall confine ourselves to mentioning one tradition pertaining to their luminosity, for the perception :of their luminosity also requires an inner light and a divine gravitation

الْكَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ عِلْمِ العَالِمِ فَقَالَ لِی: یَا جَابِرُ، إِنَّ فِی الْأَنْبِیَاءِ وَالأَوْصِیَاءِ خَمْسَهَ أَرْوَاحٍ: رُوحَ القُدُسِ وَرُوحَ الإِیمَانِ وَرُوحَ الحَیَاهِ وَرُوحَ القُوَّهِ وَرُوحَ الشَّهْوَهِ. فَبِرُوحِ القُدُسِ یَا جَابِرُ عَرَفُوا مَا تَحْتَ العَرْشِ إِلَی مَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَی. ثُمَّ قَالَ: یَا جَابِرُ إِنَّ هَذِهِ الأَرْبَعَهِ أَرْوَاحٌ یُصِیبُهَا الحِدْثَانُ إِلاّ رُوحَ القُدُسِ فَإِنَّهَا لا

تَلْهُو وَلا تَلْعَبُ.

In al-Kafi (al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Jabir, from Abu Ja'far (A). Jabir says:] I asked him concerning the knowledge of the Knowing One (al-'Alim, i.e. an Imam.) He replied saying, "O Jabir, verily, there are five spirits in the prophets and the awsiya' the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Faith, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Power, and the Spirit of Appetite. By the means of the Holy Spirit, O Jabir, they know everything from the Throne to underneath the earth." Then he added, "O Jabir, all the four spirits are subject to vicissitudes, but not the Holy Spirit, which does not engage in diversion or (play."(١)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِي بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: (وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ.) قَالَ: خَلْقٌ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَعْظَمُ مِنْ جِبْرَئِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ، كَانَ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يُخْبِرُهُ وَيُسَدِّدُهُ. وَهُوَ مَعَ الأَئِمَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Basir that he said: I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (A) concerning the statement of God, the Blessed and the Exalted, "And thus have We inspired in thee (O Muhammad) a Spirit of Our Command. Thou knewest not what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith' (۴۲:۵۲)." He replied, "(The Spirit mentioned in the verse) is one of the creatures of God, the Blessed and the Exalted, greater than Gabriel and Michael, that was with

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۲۷۲, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab fihi dhikr al-arwah al-lati fi al-A'immah" hadith ۲.

the Messenger of God (S) and which used to inform and guide him, and after him it is (with the Imams (A)."(١)

From the first tradition one comes to know that the prophets and the awsiya' (A) possess a sublime spiritual station which is called the Holy Spirit (ruh al-qudus; lit, 'the Spirit of Holiness'). By the means of that station they encompass all the particles of the universe epistemically and ontologically (ihateh-ye 'ilmi qayyumi). In that spirit, there is no negligence, sleep, error, forgetfulness and other vicissitudes associated with contingency or any of the changes and deficiencies pertaining to the realm of .mulk

Rather, it belongs to the world of the immaterial Unseen and the greater Jabarut. From the second tradition, one comes to know that that spirit is perfectly non-material and greater than Gabriel and Michael, who are the greatest inhabitants of .the station of proximity of the Jabarut

Yes, the awliya', whose natural form (tinah) has been fashioned by God, the Exalted, with the mighty hands of His own Beauty and Majesty, and manifested Himself, in the first manifestation of the Essence (tajalliye dhati-ye awwali), with all the Names, Attributes and the all-inclusive station of Unity (maqam al-ahadiyyat-a jam') in their perfect mirror, and initiated them into the reality of the Names and the Attributes in the Unseen privacy (khalwatgah al-ghayb) of the Divine Ipseity-the majesty of their glory and beauty is beyond the reach of the aspirations of the gnostics, and the summit of their perfection is beyond

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١ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ٢٧٣, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab al-ruh al-lati yusaddidu Allah biha alA'immah" hadith ١.

access to the gnostic endeavors of the people of the heart. And it is mentioned in a :(tradition of the Prophet (S

عَلِيٌّ مَمْسُوسٌ فِی ذَاتِ اللهِ.

(Ali is immersed in the Essence of God, the Exalted.(۱'

In former days, this author, like a bat describing the world-illuminating sun, has described a modicum of the station of prophethood and wilayah in a separate treatise (named Misbah al-hidayah.(۲

The Waiting Of 'The Seven Hijabs' Mentioned In Relation To The Prophet

Several probable meanings have been suggested for these words of the noble tradition: كَيْفَ يُوصَفُ عَبْدٌ احْتَجَبَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِسَبْعٍ and here we shall mention some of them.

First is the one suggested by the perfect gnostic and traditionist, the marhum Fayd (M). It is narrated in a tradition that there are seventy thousand veils of light and darkness for God, the Exalted; were He to remove them, the lights of Divine Beauty will burn down everything that His sight falls upon. Accordingly, it is probable that كَيْفَ يُوصَفُ عَبْدٌ احْتَجَبَ اللهُ بِسَبْعٍ means that [for the Prophet, most of] all those veils have been removed so that out of the seventy-thousand only seven remain.(۳) According to this interpretation, the phrase involves an ellipsis and means احتجب الله عنه بسبع with God, the Glorious, as the active subject [of the verb احتجب].

Although this interpretation is perhaps more appropriate than the other probable meanings, it is not indisputable. From the viewpoint of wording, a more appropriate expression for the description to convey such a sense would be: ما احتجب الله عنه إلا بسبع or ما احتجب عن

۱- Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-anwar, vol. xxxix, p. ۳۱۳, "Ta'rikh Amir al-Mu'minin" bab ۸۸, hadith ۵.

۲- Misbah al-hidayah ila al-khilafah wa al-wilayah, written in ۱۳۴۹ H.

Al-Fayd al-Kashani, al-Wafi, vol. v, p. ۶۱۴, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr” “bab al - ۳
.musafahah” hadith ۱۶

As in accordance with this interpretation, the perfection of the Messenger . الله إلا ـ بسبع
and the impermissibility of describing him relates not to the presence of the seven veils but to the absence of the other veils, it would have been more appropriate to mention them.

Moreover, from the viewpoint of meaning, since, apparently, these veils of light and darkness that belong to God, the Exalted, pertain to creation and not to the Names and the Attributes, it entails that there is a creature nearer [to the Divine Essence] than the sacred light of the Noble Messenger (S) whereas it has been established that his being is the nearest veil and the first creature and there are not even any veils of Names and Attributes for that master, as has been proved in its own proper place, and the sevenfold stations and mysteries of that master are also not a veil for himself.

A second interpretation is the one proffered by the erudite traditionist, the marhum Majlisi, may God elevate his station in the realm of sanctity, which he also narrates from some others. According to this interpretation, this sentence is mentioned in the way of introduction and intended to describe the Prophet through later sentences.(١)

That is, it means to say: 'How could be described a servant, for whom God, Who is concealed from the creatures with seven veils, has made obedience in the earth like obedience to him in the heaven-like a king who is situated beyond seven

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١- Al-Majlisi, Mir'at al-'uqul, vol. ix, p. ٧١, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr" "bab al musafahah" hadith ١۶.

curtains for his subjects, who cannot have access to him except through the mediation of a vizier appointed for them, and who sends a decree declaring that his ’.command is mine

And that which is meant by the sevenfold veils are the seven heavens from beyond which the revelations of God reach us through the Messenger. He has also mentioned another possible interpretation close to this one wherein the sevenfold veils are identified as the luminous veils of the Names.(١) Although this interpretation, like the former, is not contestable from the viewpoint of meaning, it is inadequate or rather .more farfetched from the viewpoint of wording and description

There is another probable interpretation of it which is much sounder and convincing and more appropriate to the occasion. However, the correctness of this interpretation has been used in a transitive sense in احتجب depends on one of two things: either that or that it be permissible to make it transitive with a ba; and in both حَجَبَ the sense of .(the cases there be an ellipsis involving the object (maf’ul

Assuming the propriety of one of these two matters mentioned, this is what is meant in accordance with this interpretation: ‘How could a creature be described whom God, the Exalted, has concealed with seven veils, and for whose beauty and spirituality, which are on a par with the Divine will (mashiyyah), He has assigned seven veils extending from the plane of corporeal nature to the plane of the absolute mashiyyah, or from

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Al-Majlisi, Mir’at al-’uqul, vol. ix, p. ٧١, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr” “bab al musafahah” -١ .hadith ١۶

the plane of the corporeal realm of mulk of that master to the Unseen station (maqam al-ghayb) of his ipseity (huwiyyah). I could not find any instance in the lexicon and usage for the transitive meaning of although some scholars state that there is no .'impediment to making it transitive with a ba

وَالعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللهِ، وَلَعَلَّ اللهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِکَ أَمْراً.

And all knowledge is with God, and perchance He may make something to come .about hereafter

The Delegation (Tafwid) Of The Affair To The Messenger Of God (S), As Indicated By This And Many Other Traditions

It should be known that the term tafwid is used in a special sense in discussions on .(jabr and tafwid (predestination and total human freedom

According to this sense of tafwid, it means that God, the Exalted, has na'udhubillah, dissociated Himself in some respect from making any kind of dispositions in the world, right from the remotest extremity of creation pertaining to the Unseen immaterial spheres to the other end of the realm of creation and [corporeal] existence and delegated its administration to a being which is either a perfectly and completely spiritual and immaterial being possessing will and freedom of action, or a physical existent devoid of will and consciousness, which has a complete freedom of .independent action therein

Tafwid in this sense of delegation of Divine functions to someone, either in the matter of creation (takwin) or that of legislation (tashri') or on the plane of administration of the affairs of the creatures and their instruction (ta'dib), is impossible, and it implies the affirmation of deficiency and contingency in relation to the Necessary Being and

.negation of contingency and need in relation to contingent being

Opposed to it is jabr, which means negation of causal efficiency in relation to the various planes of existence and an outright negation of the entire system of causes and effects. This notion is also absolutely false and contrary to firm metaphysical proofs. This is not restricted to the acts of legally responsible persons (mukallafun) as is generally known. Rather, the negation of jabr and tafwid in this sense is the operating sunnah of God in all the planes of being and in all the spheres of the Seen and the Unseen. However, the proof of this matter lies outside the scope of these .pages

The traditions negating jabr and tajwid are to be taken to apply to these meanings of the terms. [The term tafwid] has some other meaning in those traditions which do affirm tafwid [such as the following tradition of al-Kafi from Imam al-Baqir concerning the legislation of certain laws by the Prophet himself], or those which mention the delegation of all the affairs of the creatures [to the prophet], like the [second] tradition .of al-Kafi given below

In the first noble tradition of al-Kafi it is narrated with isnad from Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said, "The Messenger of God (S) prescribed the damages (diyah) for loss of an eye and life, and he forbade nabidh and every intoxicant." Someone asked him, "Was that without anything being revealed to him?" The Imam replied, "Yes. That was in order [that

God may] know those who obey the Messenger of God (S) and those who disobeyed (him."(1)

In other such instances, the Prophet (S) added a number of rak'ahs to the daily prayers(2) and made fasting during the month of Sha'ban and on three days of every (month mustahabb.(3)

:The second tradition is as follows

بإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ زُرَارَهَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ وَأَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولانِ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَوَّضَ إِلَى نَبِيِّهِ أَمْرَ خَلْقِهِ لِيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ طَاعَتُهُمْ. ثُمَّ تَلا: (وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.)

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Zurarah that he said: I heard Abu Ja'far and) Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say, "Verily, God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has delegated the affair of His creatures to His Prophet, to see how they obey him." Then he recited this verse: Take whatever the Messenger brings you and refrain from whatever he (forbids you.(4)

Eminent scholars have mentioned certain probable meanings and interpretations. One of them is that which the erudite traditionist al Majlisi (M), relates from Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni and most of the traditionists and which he himself favors. The gist of it is that God, the Exalted, after that He made the Messenger so perfect that he would not opt for anything that is not in conformity with what is true and correct and nothing would enter his blessed mind which is opposed to God's will, delegated to him the determination of some matters, such as adding to the number of rak'ahs in obligatory

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab al-tafwid ila Rasulillah (S) wa ila al-A'immah fi amr al-din" hadith ۷ عَنْ زُرَارَهَ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: وَضَعَ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ دِيَهَ العَيْنِ وَدِيَهَ النَّفْسِ وَحَرَّمَ النَّبِيذَ وَكُلَّ مُسْكِرٍ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ: وَضَعَ رَسُولُ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَكُونَ جَاءَ فِيهِ شَيْءٌ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، لِيُعْلَمَ مَنْ يُطِيعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَعْصِيهِ.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vo۴ iii, "kitab al-salat" "abwab a'dad al-farid" bab ۱۳, hadith ۱۲, ۱۴.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol vii, p. ۳۶۱, "abwab al-sawm al-mandub" bab ۲۸, hadith ۵: وَسَنَّ

رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ صَوْمَ شَعْبَانَ وَثَلاثَهِ أَیَّامٍ فِی کُلِّ شَهْرٍ مِثْلَی الفَرِیضَهِ، فَأَجازَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ ذَلِکَ.

Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۲۶۶, “kitab al-hujjah”bab al-tafwid ila Rasulillah wa alA’immah fi -۴
.amr al-din” hadith ۳

prayers, the determination of supererogatory matters relating to prayer and fasting .and so on

This delegation (tafwid) was to make manifest the dignity and majesty of the station of that Master near God, the Glorious. However, his determinations and choices are not without inspiration and revelation, and after that Master prescribed something, the matter was affirmed by revelation?(۱) Marhum Majlisi, may God elevate his station, also mentions other matters similar to this one, such as the matter of teaching, instructing, and administering the creatures, which has been delegated to him, or that of proclaiming and expositing of the ahkam, or refraining from that, in accordance with the exigencies of time-such as while observing taqiyyah-which have (been delegated to him and the other Ma'sumun?(۲

However, in any of the two interpretations offered by these revered scholars the scope of tafwid has not been explained as a rational principle consistent with established principles. Moreover, the distinction between this tafwid and the tafwid which is impossible remains unexplained. Rather, that which is implied by their statements-especially those of marhum Majlisi (M) is that it would be [affirmation of impermissible] tafwid to believe that someone other than God, the Exalted, can create, cause death, provide sustenance and give life, that one who holds such a belief is an unbeliever (kafir) and no rational person would doubt its being tantamount .to apostasy

Moreover, they have considered the matter of miracles (mu'jazat) and miraculous feats (karamat) as being totally a result of answered prayer, wherein God

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۱- Mir'at al-'uqul, vol iii, p. ۱۴۴, "kitab al-hujjah"bab al-tafwid ila Rasulillah (S)" hadith ۱.

۲- Mir'at al-'uqul, vol iii, p. ۱۴۴, "kitab al-hujjah"bab al-tafwid ila Rasulillah (S)" hadith ۱.

is the agent of the occurrences. However, the tafwid of the teaching and instruction of creatures and the bestowal and withholding of anfal and khums and the laying down of certain laws is considered correct and proper. This topic is one of those which have .rarely been clarified and hardly ever brought under a correct criterion

Mostly what they have done is to take an aspect of the matter and discuss it. This author, too, with his inadequate capacity and ineptitude and the poverty of his equipment and means cannot enter this perplexing valley by starting from the preliminaries. However, he is compelled to make a brief allusion in the way of a .metaphysical conclusion, for the disclosure of truth is unavoidable

Brief Allusion To The Meaning Of Tafwid

It should be known that there is no difference whatsoever between big and small matters in regard to the impossible tafwid, in the sense of total suspension of Divine Activity (maghluliyyat al-yaddullah) and independence of the efficiency of any creature's will and power. In the same way as the giving of life, the causing of death, creation, annihilation, and the transformation of one element into another cannot be delegated to any being, so also the delegation of the movement of a piece of straw to any creature is impossible, though it be an archangel, an apostle, or any other being from the non-material intellects and inhabitants of the highest jabarut to the realm of primal matter. All the particles of the universe are subject to the perfect Divine will

.and have no independence whatsoever of their own in any respect

All of them are needy and poor in their being, as well as in their ontic perfections, movements and pauses, power and will, and all their functions. Rather, they are sheer poverty and absolute need. Similarly, there is no distinction between major and insignificant matters in respect of God's sustaining power over being and the negation of independence of creatures and the manifestation and influence of the Divine will and its all-pervasiveness. In the same way as such weak creatures as we have the power to carry out feeble actions, such as our [bodily] movements and pauses and all the other activities, the elect of God and the non-material angels are capable of performing such great acts as giving life, causing death, providing sustenance, .creation, and annihilation

The Angel of Death is encharged with taking life and his taking of life is not something like the fulfillment of prayer, and Israfil is encharged with the giving of life, which is not of the nature of a prayer answered, and these actions do not fall under invalid tafwid. In the same way, if a perfect wali and a potent pure soul-such as the spirits of the prophets and the awliya' are-were to have the power to annihilate and create, to cause death and give life, a power given to them by God, the Exalted, it would not be an instance of impossible tafwid and should not be considered invalid. The

delegation of the affair of the creatures to a perfect spirit whose intention is annihilated in the Divine intent and whose will is an image of the Divine will, and which does not will anything except what God wills and makes no move except that which is in accordance with the best system (nizam al-aslah), whether in creation and bringing into being or in legislation and instruction, that is not only not impossible but quite proper. In fact, this is not tafwid, as pointed out in the tradition narrated by Ibn Sinan .to be cited in the next section

In fine, tafwid in the first sense is not permissible in any matter and is contradictory to firm metaphysical proof. In its second sense, it is permissible in all matters. Rather, :the system of the universe is not realized without the order of causes and effects

أَبَی اللهُ أَنْ یُجْرِیَ الأُمُورَ إلاّ بِأَسْبَابِهَا.

(God does not make things happen except through their means and causes.(١)

It should be known that that which has been said here briefly is rational and in accordance with sound metaphysical proof and mystic teaching as well as in .conformity with tradition. And God is the guide

(The Station Of The Imams (A

Know that the pure and infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A) have certain lofty spiritual stations on the spiritual journey towards Allah whose epistemic apprehension is beyond human capacity and above the intellects of the people of reason and the intuitions (shuhud) of the gnostics. As is apparent from the noble traditions, they share the spiritual station

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١- Usul al Kafi, vol. i, p: ١٨٣, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab ma'rifat Imam wa al-radd ilayh": أَبَی اللهُ أَنْ یُجْرِیَ الأَشْیَاءَ إلاّ بِالأَسْبَابِ. See also al-'Saffar, Basa'iral-darajat, p. ٢۶, juz' ١, bab ۴, hadith ٢.

of the Noble Messenger (S) and their immaculate lights were engaged in the .glorification and praise of the Sacred Essence before the creation of the worlds

الْكَافِى بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ قَالَ: كُنْتُ عِنْدَ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ الثَّانِى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ فَأَجْرَيْتُ اخْتِلافَ الشِّيعَهِ. فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، إِنَّ اللهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لَمْ يَزَلْ مُتَفَرِّداً بِوَحْدَانِيَّتِهِ، ثُمَّ خَلَقَ مُحَمَّداً وَعَلِيّاً وَفَاطِمَهَ، فَمَكَثُوا أَلْفَ دَهْرٍ، ثُمَّ خَلَقَ جَمِيعَ الأَشْيَاءِ فَأَشْهَدَهُمْ خَلْقَهَا وَأَجْرَى طَاعَتَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَفَوَّضَ أُمُورَهَا إِلَيْهِمْ. فَهُمْ يُحِلُّونَ مَا يَشَاؤُونَ وَيُحَرِّمُونَ مَا يَشَاؤُونَ. وَلَنْ يَشَاؤُوا إِلاّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، هَذِهِ الدِّيَانَهُ الَّتِى مَنْ تَقَدَّمَهَا مَرَقَ وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا مُحِقَ وَمَنْ لَزِمَهَا لَحِقَ. خُذْهَا إِلَيْكَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ.

In al-Kafi [al-Kulayni reports] with his isnad from Muhammad ibn Sinan that he said: I was with Abu Ja'far, the Second (A) when I mentioned before him the disagreement amongst the Shi'ah. Thereat he said, "O Muhammad, verily God, the Blessed and the Exalted, is ever unique in His Unity. Then He created Muhammad, 'Ali and Fatima. They remained for a thousand eons, then, He created all the things and made them witness their creation and decreed them to obey them, delegating their affairs (i.e. of the creatures) to them. Hence they permit whatever they will and forbid whatever they will and they will not anything except what God, the Exalted, wills.' Then he said, 'O Muhammad, whoever goes beyond this creed transgresses the bounds of right doctrine and whoever lags behind perishes, and whoever adheres to it attains to the .truth

(So hold on to it, O Muhammad!”(١)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ المُفَضَّلِ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لأَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: كَيْفَ كُنْتُمْ حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ فِى الأَظِلَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ: يَا مُفَضَّلُ، كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَبِّنَا، لَيْسَ عِنْدَهُ أَحَدٌ غَيْرُنَا، فِى ظِلَّهٍ خَضْرَاءَ نُسَبِّحُهُ وَنُقَدِّسُهُ وَنُهَلِّلُهُ وَنُمَجِّدُهُ، وَمَا مِنْ مَلَكٍ مُقَرَّبٍ ولا ذِى رُوحٍ غَيْرُنَا حَتَّى بَدا لَهُ فِى خَلْقِ الأَشْيَاءِ. فَخَلَقَ مَا شَاءَ كَيْفَ شَاءَ مِنَ المَلائِكَهِ وَغَيْرِهِمْ. ثُمَّ أَنْهَى عِلْمَ ذَلِكَ إِلَيْنَا.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from al-Mufaddal that he said: I said to Abu ‘Abd Allah (A), “How was your state when you were in the Shadows?” He replied, “O Mufaddal, we were with our Lord and there was none else except us in the Green Shadow: we glorified Him, called Him Holy and One and extolled Him. Besides us, there was neither any archangel nor any spirit, until when it appeared to God to originate the creation. Thereupon, He created whatever He will and howsoever He will of the angels and the other creatures. Then He gave the knowledge of that to (us.”(٢)

The traditions relating to the nature (tinah) of their bodies and the creation of their spirits and hearts, and those which speak of their having been given [the knowledge of] the Greatest Name (ism al-a’zam) and the sciences-bestowed upon them from the Unseen divine stores-of the prophets and the angels and what is above that and that which does not enter into the imagination of you and me, and that which is mentioned of their other excellences in the various chapters

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Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۴۴۱, “kitab al-hujjah” “bab mawlid al-Nabi (S) wa wafatuh” - ١ .hadith ۵

Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۴۴۱, “kitab al-hujjah” “bab mawlid al-Nabi (S) wa wafatuh” - ٢ .hadith ٧

of reliable works of our associates, especially in the Usul al-Kafi, are such as to .confound the intellect

No one can apprehend their mysteries and realities except their own sacred beings. In this noble tradition in whose exposition we are presently engaged, there is a reference to one of their excellences, which is the Verse of the Purification (al-ayat al-tathir; ٣٣:٣٣), which, in accordance with mutawatir traditions narrated through Sunni .and Shi'i chains of transmission, was revealed concerning the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt

Those who are meant by "ahl al-bayt" in the noble verse, as affirmed by the consensus of the Shi'ah and abundant or mutawatir traditions narrated through non-Shi'i ('ammah) chains of transmission, are the Household of infallibility ('ismah) and purity (taharah). This is a point whose elaboration would be explanation of what is .evident

Reality Of 'Ismah

In this, as well as other noble traditions, rijs [in verse ٣٣:٣٣] has been interpreted as doubt (shakk), and in some traditions, it is interpreted as freedom from all defects. A study of the exposition of some of the earlier traditions shows that the negation of doubt implies the negation of all inward and outward defects and, in fact, implies infallibility ('ismah). That is because infallibility is not something contrary to free will, .as in the case of matters relating to nature and instinct

Rather it is a spiritual state and a light acquired by means of the perfect light of certainty (yaqin) and total tranquility (itminan). The errors and sins that are committed by human

beings are due to inadequate conviction and faith. The degrees of conviction and faith are so various as to be beyond description. The perfect certainty of the prophets and their complete tranquility, acquired through unmediated knowledge (mushahedeh-ye hudariyyah), makes them immune to error. The conviction of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) had brought him to the station that he declared: “Even if I were to be given the whole world in order to unjustly deprive an ant of a grain, I would not do it. “(1)

In any case, by God’s pre-eternal design, they have been cleansed of shirk and doubt, purified from the impurities and defilements of the world of physical nature (‘alam al-tabiat) and the darkness of attachment to other than God, the Exalted, freed from the obfuscations of the ego and the thick sheaths of egoism and attention to other [than of God], becoming sacred divine lights and complete signs of the Lord, Who has made them purely and sheerly His own. Hence their stations are such as cannot be properly described and explained and, like the phoenix of the ghayb of Divine Ipseity, the peaks of their glory are beyond the reach of [gnostic] aspirations:

عنقا شکار کسی نشود دام باز گیر

Take thy net away for none can ever catch the phoenix.(2)

The Indescribability of Faith

It should be known that iman (faith) is also one of the spiritual perfections whose radiant reality can rarely be known by anyone. Even the faithful, so long as they remain in the world and in the

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۱- Nahj al-balaghah, Khutbah ۲۱۵. وَاللهِ لَوْ أُعْطِيتُ الأَقَالِيمَ السَّبْعَهَ بِمَا تَحْتَ أَفْلاكِهَا عَلَى أَنْ أَعْصِيَ اللهَ فِي نَمْلَهٍ أَسْلُبُهَا جُلْبَ شَعِيرَهٍ مَا فَعَلْتُهُ.

۲- Hafiz: عنقا شکار کسی نشود دام باز گیر کانجا همیشه باد به دست است دام را

darkness of nature, are unaware of the radiance of their faith and the dignity they .have before God

As long as man remains in this world, he becomes so accustomed to its conditions and habits that when he hears anything about the nobilities and bounties of the other world and its punishments and disappointments, he immediately compares them to a similar form in the realm of mulk. For instance, he compares the nobilities promised by God, the Exalted, to the faithful and the bounties He has prepared for them, and whose news has been conveyed by the prophets (A) to the gifts and honors received by men from princes and suzerains or something better and higher. He assumes the bounties of that world to be like those of this world, though somewhat more refined .and superior

Such a comparison is altogether invalid. The bounties of that world, its delights, and fragrance cannot be truly imagined by us, and anything like them does not enter our minds. We cannot conceive how a drink of the water of Paradise can possess all the imaginable and possible pleasures, each of which is distinct from the other, for the .quality of any delight [of that world] has no similarity to the pleasures of this world

In this noble tradition, there is a mention of one of the nobilities of the faithful which, in view of the people of gnosis and the people of the heart, are incomparable to ,anything and cannot be measured by any measure

and that is the statement of the tradition where it says, "Indeed, when the believer takes his brother with the hand on meeting him, God looks at them and sins are shed from their faces in the manner leaves fall from a tree." The same theme recurs in many other traditions, such as the following one:

الكَافِي بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ المُؤْمِنَيْنِ إِذَا الْتَقَيَا فَتَصَافَحَا أَقْبَلَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِمَا بِوَجْهِهِ وَتَسَاقَطَتْ عَنْهُمَا الذُّنُوبُ كَمَا يَتَسَاقَطُ الوَرَقُ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "When the faithful meet and take one another by the hand, God, the Exalted, turns to them with His face, and their sins fall from them in the manner leaves fall from a tree."(١)

God only knows what inner luminosity and nobility is associated with this look of God, the Exalted, and this attention of His with His noble face, and what veils are removed from between the faithful servant and the lights of the Beauty of the Sacred Essence and what succor it provides to the faithful. However, one should know the reality and actual secret behind these nobilities and one should not be heedless of it.

The heart's attention should be turned so that the act attains its perfect luminosity and a divine breath is blown into the act's body. That reality and secret truth lies in strengthening the bond of love and cordiality and renewal of the covenant of love and brotherhood for the

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١- Usul al Kafi, vol. ii, p. ١٨٠, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr" "bab al-musafahah" hadith ۴.

sake of God. A great significance is attached to this point in the noble traditions and is :also hinted at in traditions relating to this topic

الكَافِى بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّ المُؤْمِنَيْنِ إذَا الْتَقَيَا وَتَصَافَحا أَدْخَلَ اللهُ يَدَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمَا فَصَافَحَ أَشَدَّهُمَا حُبّاً لِصَاحِبِهِ.

In al-Kafi [al-Kulayni reports] with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "When the faithful meet and take one another by the hand, God places His hand between their (hands and shakes hand with the one who has greater love for his companion."(1)

It is stated in another tradition that when the faithful meet and shake hands, God, the Exalted, sends His mercy down upon them; nine-tenths of it belong to the one who has greater love for his companion, and if they should be equal [in love], the mercy envelopes them.(2) There are many traditions on this topic and that which have been .cited will suffice. And all praise is God's, at the beginning and the end

Thirty-Second Hadith: Conviction In Faith

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى عَنِ الحُسَيْنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ المُعَلَّى بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ الحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ الوَشَّاءِ عَن عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مِنْ صِحَّةِ يَقِينِ المَرْءِ المُسْلِمِ أنْ لا يُرْضِىَ النَّاسَ بِسَخَطِ اللهِ وَلا يَلُومَهُمْ عَلَى مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِهِ اللهُ. فَإنَّ الرِّزْقَ لا يَسُوقُهُ حِرْصُ حَرِيصٍ وَلا يَرُدُّهُ كَرَاهِيَةُ كَارِهٍ. وَلَوْ أنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ فَرَّ مِنْ رِزْقِهِ كَمَا يَفِرُّ مِنَ المَوْتِ لأَدْرَكَهُ رِزْقُهُ كَمَا يُدْرِكُهُ المَوْتُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: إنَّ اللهَ بِعَدْلِهِ وَقِسْطِهِ جَعَلَ الرَّوْحَ وَالرَّاحَةَ فِى اليَقِينِ

p: ۸۷۰

۱- Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۴۴۱, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab mawlid al-Nabi (S) wa wafatuh" p. ۱۷۹, hadith ۲.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, vol. i, p. ۴۴۱, "kitab al-hujjah" "bab mawlid al-Nabi (S) wa wafatuh" p. ۱۸۱, hadith ۱۴: أَوَمَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ المُؤْمِنَيْنِ إذَا الْتَقَيَا فَتَصَافَحَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الرَّحْمَهَ عَلَيْهِمَا؟ فَكَانَتْ تِسْعَهً وَتِسْعِينَ لأَشَدِّهِمَا حُبّاً لِصَاحِبِهِ. فَإذَا تَوَافَقَا غَمَرَتْهُمَا الرَّحْمَهُ.

وَالرِّضَا، وَجَعَلَ الهَمَّ وَالحُزْنَ فِى الشَّکِّ وَالسَّخَطِ.

With my continuous chain of transmission reaching up to Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from al-Husayn ibn Muhammad, from al-Mu'alla ibn Muhammad, from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Washsha', from 'Abd Allah ibn Sinan, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Among the things pertaining to the soundness of a Muslim's certitude [in faith] is that he would not please people while displeasing God, nor blame them for something that God has not given him. For, verily, [God's] rizq (provision, sustenance) is not brought about by anybody's greed, nor is it withheld by anyone's disapproval, and were anyone of you to flee from his rizq like lie flees death, his rizq would overtake him in the way he is overtaken by death." Then he added, "Indeed God, with His justice and fairness, has put joy and comfort in certainty (yaqin) and satisfaction (al-rida) and He has put sorrow and grief in doubt and dissatisfaction.(١)

Exposition

Al-Jawhari says, sakhal (vowelized like faras) and sukht (vowelized like qufl) are the opposite of satisfaction (rida). Hence, sakhita means 'ghadiba' (i.e. 'he became angry' or 'indignant') and such a one is sakil (angry). Al-qist, with kasrah of the qaf, mean justice ('adl); hence its mention along with 'adl is for the sake of elucidation.

Al-rawh and al-rahah are synonymous, meaning comfort, as mentioned by al-Jawhari. Hence their mention alongside is for the sake of elucidation. Or that rawh means the peace of the heart and rahah signifies the ease of the body, as

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١ - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, p. ٥٧, "Kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab fadl al-yaqin," hadith ٢.

(stated by Majlisi.(١)

As to al-hamm and al-huzn, al-Jawhari considers them as synonymous, on which basis their mention by side of one another would be elucidatory. And Majlisi says that hamm probably means the agitation felt by the soul at the time of experiencing (doubt (and dissatisfaction), and huzn is the sorrow and anxiety felt after its passing away.(٢)

Section ١

point

it has been considered to have two probable وَلا ـ يَلُومَهُمْ عَلَى مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِهِ الله As to the statement interpretations. First, that he would not blame the people and complain for their refraining from giving him something, as it is a matter subject to Divine power and providence, and God, the Exalted, has not decreed that gift as part of his provision, and one who is a man of conviction knows that it is a an act of Divine providence and so he would not blame anyone. This interpretation has been suggested by the (muhaqqiq Fayd(٣) (M) and the learned traditionist, Majlisi, has also affirmed it.(٤)

The honorable Fayd (M) has also suggested another interpretation, which is that one would not blame them for something God, the Exalted, has not given them, for God, the Exalted, has gifted the people differently and no one should be blamed for it [i.e. for not possessing something]. And this is like the tradition, which states that "Had the people known how God has created men, no one would blame another."(٥) The honorable traditionist Majlisi (M) has said, "The improbability of this interpretation is not hidden, especially on

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Al-Majlisi, Mirat al-'uqul, vii, ٣٥٩, "Kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab fadl al-yaqin," - ١ .hadith ٢

Al-Majlisi, Mirat al-'uqul, vii, ٣٥٩, "Kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab fadl al-yaqin," - ٢ .hadith ٢

.Al-Fayd al-Kashani, al-Wafi, iv, ٢۶٩ -٣

۴- Mir’at al-’uqul, vii, ۳۵۶, “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab fadl al-yaqin,” hadith ۲.

۵- Al-Wafi, iv, ۲۷۰.

:consideration of the following explanatory phrase

فَإنَّ الرِّزْقَ لا يَسُوقُهُ...

(for, verily, [God's] provision is not facilitated by...(١)...

In the opinion of this author, the second interpretation is more appropriate than the first one, especially in view of the aforementioned explanatory phrase. That is because one may blame people in the state of need and straitened livelihood only if their livelihood (rizq) is under their own control and one's effort and endeavor are the [efficient] means of its increase. Then one may say [to another], '[Look] I have tried and made effort, whereas you have not done so, and therefore you are afflicted with straitened livelihood." However, the people of certainty know that livelihood is not .obtained by one's greed and effort, and so they do not blame others

Reconciling Traditions Concerning Livelihood Being Apportioned And Traditions Exhorting Effort

It should be known that the like of these noble traditions whose literal import is that the rizq is apportioned and predetermined-something which is also indicated by the noble verses of the Qur'an-do not contradict the traditions which command one to seek livelihood and exhort one to make effort in one's occupation and trade, and even consider the lack of effort as reprehensible and blameworthy. Thus, they consider one who fails to make an effort to seek livelihood as one whose prayers are not answered and whom God does not provide with livelihood. There are many traditions :on this topic and it will suffice here to cite one hadith

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الحَسَنِ شَيْخِ الطَّائِفَهِ قُدِّسَ سِرُّهُ بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ عَبْدِالعَزِيزِ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو

١- Mir'at al-'uqul, vii, ٣٥٧, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr;" "bab fadl al-yaqin," hadith ٢.

عَبْدِاللهِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: مَا فَعَلَ عُمَرُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ؟ قُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، أَقْبَلَ عَلَى العِبَادَةِ وَتَرَكَ التِّجَارَةَ. فَقَالَ: وَيْحَهُ! أَمَا عَلِمَ أَنَّ تَارِكَ الطَّلَبِ لا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُ؟ إِنَّ قَوْماً مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ: (وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ،) أَغْلَقُوا الأَبْوَابَ وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَى العِبَادَةِ وَقَالُوا: قَدْ كُفِينَا. فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَقَالَ: مَا حَمَلَكُمْ عَلَى مَا صَنَعْتُمْ؟ فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، تُكُفِّلَ لَنَا بِأَرْزَاقِنَا فَأَقْبَلْنَا عَلَى العِبَادَةِ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ مَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يُسْتَجَبْ لَهُ. عَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّلَبِ.

From Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, the Shaykh al-Ta'ifah al-Tusi (Q) who narrates with his isnad from 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz that he said, "Abu 'Abd Allah (A) asked me, "What is 'Umar ibn Muslim doing?" I said, "May I be made your ransom, he has devoted himself to worship and he has abandoned his trade." He said, "Woe to him! Doesn't he know that the prayer of one who abandons the search (of livelihood) is not accepted? Indeed a group of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) locked their doors and turned to worship when this verse was revealed, 'And whosoever fears God, He will appoint for him a way out, and He will provide for him whence lie never reckoned (۶۵:۳).' When the Prophet (S) came to hear about it, he summoned them and asked them, 'What prompted you to do what you have done.' They said, 'O Messenger of Allah, God

has guaranteed our livelihood and so we have turned to worship.' He said to them: The prayer of one who does that would not be accepted. You ought to seek livelihood."[1]

The reason for the absence of contradiction between the traditions is that livelihood, and all matters for that, are subject to God's power even after one's effort. Our effort is not an independent agent in the acquisition of livelihood. Rather, to make effort is a duty of the creatures, and the ordainment of the affairs and all apparent and non-apparent means, most of which are beyond the control of the creatures, is by the determination of the Exalted Creator.

Hence a human being of sound conviction and informed of the courses of matters-while he does not refrain from effort and performs his duties as prescribed by reason and revealed law, and not closing the door of effort with false excuses-still considers everything as being derived from the sacred Divine Being and does not consider anything as having any efficiency on the plane of being and its perfections. The seeker, the seeking, and the sought derive from Him. That which this noble tradition says, that the man of sound conviction does not blame anyone for the lack of increase in the people's livelihood, means that if they make the usual amount of effort they are not to be blamed. Moreover, to blame those who do not make the effort is preferable in order to induce them to effort—a point which is

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۱- Al-Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shiah, xii, ۱۵, "kitab al-tijarah," "abwab muqiddimat al-tijarah," hadith ۷.

.asserted in the noble traditions

In fine, this theme is one of the ramifications of jabr and tafwid (predestination and free will) and one who has studied that issue can discover the underlying fact of the .matter, whose elaboration is beyond the scope of our discussion

Section ۲: The Signs Or Soundness Or Conviction

point

In this noble tradition, two things are considered the signs of the soundness of one's conviction. First, that one should not seek the pleasure of the people at the cost of God's displeasure and wrath. Second, one should not blame people for what God has not given them. These two are the fruits of perfect conviction, and their opposite qualities are due to the weakness of conviction and an ailing faith. In these pages, whenever appropriate, we have explained faith, and conviction, and their fruits. Here, too, we shall briefly mention these two qualities in their state of soundness and health .as well as their opposite condition

One should know that a man seeks the pleasure and satisfaction of people and tries to win their hearts and to be in their good graces because he considers them to be effective in matters that are of his interest. For example, one who loves money and wealth feels humble before the rich; he flatters them and is obsequious in front of .them

Those who seek position and outward honor, flatter the subordinates and obsequiously seek to win their hearts somehow or another. The same thing goes on in a circle. The subordinates flatter men of position and the seekers

of position flatter the mean subordinates, except those who, on the either side of the matter, have trained themselves through spiritual discipline and seek the pleasure of God. The world and its adornments do not shake them, and they seek the pleasure of God in leading, and seek God and truth in following.

The Twofold Classes Of The People

The people of the world are briefly divisible into two classes. They are either those whom certitude has brought to the point that they see all the outward means and apparent agents as being subject to the perfect and eternal will of the Necessary Being. They see and seek nothing except God, and they believe that lie is the sole Master and Agent in the world and the Hereafter. Finding a certitude unmarred by deficiency, doubt, and hesitation, they have true faith in one of the noble verses of the Qur'an, which says:

(قُلْ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِکَ الْمُلْکِ تُؤْتِی الْمُلْکَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْکَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ.)

Say: O God, Master of all sovereignty, Thou givest sovereignty to whom Thou wilt, and seizest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt... (۳:۲۶)

They consider God, the Exalted, the Master of the kingdom of being and all gifts to be from that Sacred Being. They consider all the ebbs and flows of being and all the existential perfections to be derived from the Sacred Being in accordance with the [best] order [of existence] and the [universal] good. Of course, the doors of gnosis are opened for such persons and their hearts become divine. They do not attach

any worth to the pleasure and displeasure of the people and seek nothing except God's good pleasure. Their eager eyes do not seek anything except God and in their hearts and with their entire being they murmur the melody, "My God, when You grant us, who can intercept Your favor? And should You deprive us [of anything], who can restore it to us?"

Hence, they close their eyes to the people, their favors and their world, opening the eyes of their need on God, glorious is His Majesty. Such persons would never exchange the displeasure of God, the Exalted, with the pleasure of the entire order of beings, as stated by the Commander of Faithful (A). While they attach no significance to anything except God, the Exalted, and consider all existents to be in need of Allah, nevertheless, they view all with the eyes of wonder, mercy and compassion, and do not blame anyone for any matter except in order to reform and educate him.

Hence such were the prophets (A) who viewed everything as belonging to God and as manifestations of His Beauty and Glory. They did not view God's creatures except with love and compassion, not blaming anyone in their hearts for any inadequacy and weakness, though they did blame them outwardly for the sake of the general good and the reform of the human family. This was among the fruits of the immaculate tree of certitude and faith and their understanding of the Divine laws.

However, as

to the second group, they are those who are oblivious of God, and if perchance they attend, it is an inadequate attention and an incomplete faith. As a result, since attention to multiplicity and the outward causes and means has made them neglectful .of the Cause of all causes, they seek the pleasure of the creatures

At times, they are such that they seek to acquire the goodwill of the weakest of creatures while preparing the means of God's displeasure and wrath. Thus they are led to accommodate to the sinners, or neglect the duty of amr bi al-ma'ruf and nahy 'an al-munkar when conditions call for its performance, or they give decrees (fatwa) permitting what is unlawful, or are guilty of false testimony, or backbite and slander the faithful to please worldly people and men of outward status and position. All such conduct is due to the weakness of faith, or rather it constitutes a degree of idol worship (shirk). Such a view makes man prone to many fatal traits, including those mentioned in this noble tradition. Such a person has a bad opinion of God's servants and he treats them with enmity and hostility, blaming them and vilifying them in .matters, and so on

Section ۳: The Views Of The Mu'tazilah And The Asha'irah And The Correct Position

Majlisi, the traditionist (M) in Mir'at al-uqul, has a discussion under this noble tradition concerning whether the rizq apportioned by God, the Exalted, is confined to what is lawful and whether it includes the unlawful also. He has cited the conflicting opinions of the Ash'arites

and the Mu'tazilites on this issue and the recourse taken by the two sides to traditions and narrated texts. He considers the Imami position to be in accord with the view of the Mu'tazilites that the apportioned sustenance (rizq al-maqsum) does not include the unlawful and is limited to the lawful. He also cites the arguments of the Mu'tazilah that take recourse to the literal meaning of some verses and traditions and are based on the literal meaning of 'rizq'-as is the practice of the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites.(١)

He has approved of the arguments of the Mu'tazilah and, apparently, finds their statements to be in accord with the dominant opinion of the Imamiyyah. However, it should be noted of that this issue is one of the corollaries of the problem of jabr and tafwid, and the Imami position in this regard neither conforms to that of the Asha'irah nor to that of the Mu'tazilah. Rather, the Mu'tazili position is more worthless and degenerate than that of the Ash'arites, and if some Imami theologians (R) have inclined towards it, that has been due to the neglect of the truth of the matter.

As referred to earlier, the issue of jabr and tafwid has remained much vague in the discussions of most of the scholars of the two sects, and the controversy has not been resolved on the basis of right criteria. Hence, the relation of this issue to the problem of jabr and tafwid has gone mostly unnoticed, although it is

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١- Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Tafsir al-kabir, ii, ٣٠.

.one of its major ramifications

Briefly, the Ash’arite belief that the lawful and the unlawful form part of the apportioned sustenance implies jabr, and the Mu’tazilite belief that the unlawful does not form part of the apportioned sustenance implies tafwid. Both of them (jabr and tafwid) are invalid and their falsity has been made evident in its appropriate place.

We, in accordance with established and demonstrable principles, consider the lawful and the unlawful as apportioned by God, in the same way as we consider sins to be by Divine determination (taqdir) and decree (qada’), though it does not lead to jabr and invalidity. These pages are not appropriate for setting forth the proof and I have set a condition with myself not to discuss technical matters, myself being ignorant of their core reality.(۱) Accordingly, we shall confine ourselves to this passing reference, and God is the Guide.

Marhum Majlisi has opened another discussion under this noble tradition, as to whether it is absolutely obligatory upon God, the Exalted, to provide the sustenance of His creatures or only in the case of effort on their part.(۲)

This is a topic which is more appropriate to the principles of the theologians and one must proceed in these discussions, in general, with another approach based on metaphysical criteria and definite principles. What is preferable is to abstain right away from this kind of discussions, which are not entirely fruitful, and we have pointed out earlier that the apportioning of sustenances in accordance with Divine

p: ۸۸۱

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۱ - Author’s Note: However, as the hand is subject to His power, we have briefly offered a study of this problem in the exposition of the thirty-ninth tradition. [As stated by Imam ‘Ali, may peace be upon him]: عَرَفتُ اللّه بفَتحِ العَزائِمِ ونَقضِ الهِمَم. I knew God [i.e. His omnipotence] through the annulment of decisions and the breaking up of resolves.

۲ - Mirat al-’uqul, vii, ۳۵۸ “kitab al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab fadl al-yaqin,” hadith ۲.

.ordainment does not contradict with the making of effort and endeavor in seeking it

Last Section

This section pertains to the explanation of the statement that God, the Exalted, has placed joy and comfort in certitude and satisfaction and sorrow and grief in doubt and displeasure and that this is in accordance with Divine justice. On should know that the joy and comfort (rawh and rahah) mentioned in this noble tradition, and so also the grief and sorrow mentioned therein, as they are mentioned in relation to the determination and apportionment of sustenances, pertain to worldly affairs and the search and acquisition of livelihood, though in accordance with a certain .interpretation their relation to affairs of the Hereafter is also correct

Here, we intend to expound this [part of the] noble tradition. One should know that a human being possessing convinced faith in God and His ordainments and reliant on the firm pillar of the Absolutely Omnipotent, Who determines all the matters in accordance with what is best for the creatures (masalih) and possesses absolute and perfect mercy and is absolutely All-compassionate and All-munificent, will of course find all difficulties become easy for him by virtue of such a conviction and to him all hardships become easy to bear. His effort in search of livelihood is very different from the quest of the worldly people and those who are afflicted with doubt and shirk. Those who rely on the apparent causes and means are continuously shaky and anxious in their pursuits. And if

they face any adversity they find it very unpleasant, for they do not consider them to .be accompanied with hidden benefits

Also, one who considers his felicity to lie in the attainment of the world is afflicted with pain and misery in its pursuit, losing comfort and happiness. All his attention and care is spent in that pursuit. Thus, we see that worldly people are perpetually in a state of anguish and they do not possess the peace of mind or of the body. Similarly, if the world and its ornaments are taken away from them, they become subject to endless sorrow and grief. Should an affliction visit them, they lose all forbearance and strength and they have no fortitude in the face of events. The reason for it is nothing except their doubt and shaky belief in Divine ordainment and its justice, and its fruits are such matters as these. We have offered an explanation earlier in this regard and .so it will be inappropriate to repeat it

As to the explanation of the dependence of these effects on certitude and satisfaction, and of those effects on doubt and anger, of their being such by Divine ordainment, and that this ordainment is just, that depends on the explanation of the sway of the efficiency (fa'iliyyah) of God, the Exalted, throughout the planes of being, without its leading to jabr, which is invalid as well as impossible. It also depends on the causative explanation of the perfection of the order of

being, and both of these theses lie outside the scope of these pages. And all praise .refers to God, at every beginning and end

Thirty–Third Hadith: Wilayah And Works

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الأَقْدَمِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الْكُلَيْنِيِّ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَمَّنْ ذَكَرَهُ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ بْنِ زُرَارَةَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مَارِدٍ قَالَ: قُلتُ لأبى عبدِالله عليهِ السلامُ: حَديثٌ رُوِىَ لنا أنّك قُلتَ "إذا عَرفْتَ فَاعمَلْ ما شِئتَ؟" فقالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: قدْ قُلتُ ذلك. قلتُ: وإنْ زَنوا أو سَرقوا أو شربوا الخَمرَ؟ فقالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ لى: إنا للهِ وإنا إليهِ راجِعونَ! واللهِ ما أنصَفونا أَنْ نكُونَ أخَذنَا بالعَملِ ووُضِعَ عنهُم. إنمَا قلتُ إذا عرِفتَ فاعملْ ما شِئتَ من قَليلِ الخَيرِ وكثيرِه فإنّه يُقبلُ مِنك.

With my chain of authorities reaching up to the pioneering shaykh, Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni (R) from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from al-Husayn ibn Said, from someone who narrated it from ‘Ubayd ibn Zurarah, from Muhammad ibn Marid that he said: I said to Abu ‘Abd Allah (A): A hadith has been narrated to us from you that you said, “When you have acquired the ma’rifah, i.e. of the rights of the Imam’s (A), then do whatever you want.” He replied, “I have indeed said that.” I said to him, “Even if one were to commit adultery and theft and drink wine?” He said, “Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un! By God, they (i.e. those who have interpreted our statements in such a manner) have not been just to us. (Is it fair for them

to believe that) they would get away with whatever they do whereas we ourselves will be answerable for our acts? What I said was that when you have acquired ma'rifah perform any works you want, whether its good be great or small, for they will (be accepted of you."(١)

Exposition

In the sentence 'hadithun ruwiyah.. .'], hadith is mubtada and ruwiyah is its khabar.] In the .(أی هو أنک) Annaka, with fathah (on the alif) is the khabar of an elliptic mubtada the ma'rifah (knowledge) meant in this tradition is the ma'rifah of إذا عرفتَ statement may be either in the first or the third قلتُ، قالَ قلتُ... the Imam (A). In the expression is wasliyyah, and the phrase means, 'if they acquire ma'rifah, إنْ the , وإن زنَوا person. In '.they may do whatever they want, even if it is a major sin

is an expression of istirja' and is said at the time of a إنا لِلهِ وإنا إلَيه راجعونَ The phrase severe and great calamity, and since this slander or misunderstanding was a great calamity, the Hadrat uttered it in order to dissociate and absolve himself totally from .it

that is, 'they have not been fair to us in [believing] , فی أن تكونَ means أنْ تكونَ The phrase that they would be quit of all accountability for their actions due to their belief in us (i.e. our imamate) while we ourselves would be accountable and answerable (for our [acts): The Imam then clarifies what he had meant, that [belief in

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Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۴۶۴, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr;" 'bib anna al-iman la - ١ .yadurru ma'ahu sayyi'ah," hadith ۵

wilayah is a prerequisite for the acceptability of works [before God], as will be .discussed hereafter, God the Exalted willing

Explanation Of Absence Of Contradiction Between Traditions That Exhort One To Perform

Ibadah And Abstain From Sins And Other Traditions Which Apparently Conflict With Them'

It should be known that if one were to refer to traditions that have been narrated concerning the states of the Noblest Messenger (S) and the Imams (A) of guidance, and study the character of their devotion ('ubudiyyah), their painstaking diligence, their lamentations and entreaties, their humility and sense of indigence, their fear and sorrow before the sacred station of the Lord of Majesty, and if one were to study the character of their intimate supplications before the Fulfiller of Needs-traditions whose number far exceeds what is required to establish tawatur-and similarly, if one were to refer to the counsels given by the Noble Messenger (S) to the Commander of the Faithful (A) and also the counsels given by the Imams to one another, as well as to the elect of the Shi'ah and their sincere followers, the greatly eloquent and emphatic exhortations that they would make warning them against disobedience to God, the Exalted-a theme with which the books of tradition and chapters relating to doctrinal and legal duties are replete-he would be convinced that certain other traditions whose apparent and literal import contradicts with these traditions are not to be .taken literally

Therefore, if possible, they must be interpreted in a way that they do not conflict with those explicit and definitive traditions, which constitute the essentials of the faith, or they must be reconciled. Otherwise, they must be

referred back to their authors. In these pages, we cannot possibly reconcile all the relevant traditions or mention even a hundredth part of them and explain them. However, it is unavoidable that we mention some of these narrations so that the truth .is disclosed

الكَافِی بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: شِیعَتُنَا (هُمُ) الشَّاحِبُونَ الذَّابِلُونَ النَّاحِلُونَ الَّذِینَ إِذَا جَنَّهُمُ اللَّیْلُ اسْتَقْبَلُوهُ بِحُزْنٍ.

Al-Kulayni reports in al-Kafi with his isnad from Abu ‘Abd Allah—Imam al-Sadiq (A), that he said, “Our Shi’ah (followers) arc those whose hearts are informed with sorrow and grief and who are lean as a result of intense sorrow and worship. They are those (who at the fall of the darkness of the night turn to it with sadness?”(١

.There are many narrations on this topic describing the characteristics of the Shi’ah

وَعَنْهُ عَنِ المُفَضَّلِ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ: إِیَّاکَ وَالسَّفِلَه، فَإِنَّمَا شِیعَهُ جَعْفَرٍ مَنْ عَفَّ بَطْنَهُ وَفَرْجَهُ وَاشْتَدَّ جِهَادُهُ وَعَمِلَ لِخَالِقِهِ وَرَجَا ثَوَابَهُ وَخَافَ عِقَابَهُ. فَإِذَا رَأَیْتَ اُولَئِکَ، فَاُولَئِکَ شِیعَهُ جَعْفَرٍ.

From him, froth al-Mufaddal, who narrates from Abu ‘Abd Allah—Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (A), that he said, “Beware of these base people who claim to be Shi’is. Verily, the Shi’ah of ‘Ali (A) is none except one who is chaste in his manner of earning his livelihood and sexual conduct. It is one whose diligence is intense, who works for his Creator, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment. When you (see such people know that they are the followers (Shi’ah) of Ja’far.”(٢

وَعَنِ الأَمَالِی لِلْحَسَنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ

Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, ٢٣٣, “kitab-al-iman wa al-kufr,” “bab al-mu’min wa - ١ .‘alamatuh,” hadith ٧

.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, ٢٣٣, hadith ٩ -٢

الطُّوسِيِّ شَيْخِ الطَّائِفَهِ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَن جَدِّهِ عَنِ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ لِخَيْثَمَهَ: أَبْلِغْ شِيعَتَنا أَنَّا لا نُغْنِى مِنَ اللهِ شَيْئاً. وَأَبْلِغْ شِيعَتَنَا أَنَّهُ لا يُنَالُ مَا عِنْدَ اللهِ إِلاّ بِالعَمَلِ وَأَبْلِغ شِيعَتَنا أَنَّ أَعْظَمَ النَّاسِ حَسْرَةً يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ مَنْ وَصَفَ عَدْلاً ثُمَّ خَالَفَهُ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ. وَأَبْلِغْ شِيعَتَنَا أَنَّهُمْ إِذَا قَامُوا بِمَا أُمِرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَهِ.

Al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Tusi, the Shaykh at-Ta'ifah (M) narrates with his chain of authorities from Imam al-Rida (A) from his father, from his grandfather from Abu Ja'far—Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said to Khaythamah, "Convey this message to our followers (Shi'ah) that we do not avail them against God that is, do not neglect works for reliance upon us. Tell them that that which is with God cannot be attained except with works. Tell them that, of all people, the greatest regret on the Day of Resurrection will be of those who speak about some aspect of justice but violate it in practice to do something else. 'Tell our followers that if they observe what they have been asked to, they will be triumphant on the Day of Resurrection."(١)

الكَافِى بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: لا تَذْهَبْ بِكُمُ المَذَاهِبَ. فَوَاللهِ، مَا شِيعَتُنَا إِلاّ مَنْ أَطَاعَ اللهَ.

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni narrates with his chain of authorities, from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said, "Do not be carried away by false doctrines. By God, Our follower (Shi'ah) is none except one who obeys God."(٢)

This means, "Do

١- Al-Amali, p. ٣٨٠, juz' ١٣.

٢- Usul al-Kaf i, ii, ٧٣, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-ta'ah wa al-taqwa," hadith ١.

not invent [doctrinal] excuses to justify disobedience to God and do not adopt any false notion that 'We are Shi'ah and our attachment to the Ahl al-Bayt is the means of ".our salvation.' By God Our Shi'ah is none except him who obeys God, the Exalted

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ عن أبى جعفر عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: «يَا جَابِرُ، أَيَكْتَفِى مَنِ انْتَحَلَ التَّشَيُّعَ أنْ يَقُولَ بِحُبِّنَا أَهْلَ البَيْتِ؟! فَوَاللّهِ مَا شِيعَتُنَا إلاّ مَنِ اتَّقَى اللّهَ وَأَطَاعَهُ. إلَى أنْ قَالَ: فَاتَّقُوا اللّهَ وَاعْمَلُوا لِمَا عِنْدَ اللّهِ. لَيْسَ بَيْنَ اللّهِ وَبَيْنَ أَحَدٍ قَرَابَةٌ. أَحَبُّ العِبَادِ إلَى اللّهِ تَعَالَى وَأكْرَمُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِطَاعَتِهِ. يَا جَابِرُ، وَاللّهِ مَا يُتَقَرَّبُ إلَى اللّهِ إلّا بِالطَّاعَهِ. مَا مَعَنَا بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَلا عَلَى اللّه لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ حُجَّةٍ، مَنْ كَانَ للّهِ مُطِيعاً فَهُوَ لَنَا وَلِيٌّ، وَمَنْ كَانَ للّهِ عَاصِياً فَهُوَ لَنَا عَدُوٌّ، وَمَا تُنَالُ وَلايَتُنَا إلّا بِالعَمَلِ وَالوَرَعِ.»

In al-Kafi, al-Kulayni reports with his chain of authorities from Jabir, form Abu Ja'far (A) that he— Jabir said: He said to me, "O Jabir, is it sufficient for one who follows Shi'ism to claim that he loves us, the Ahl al-Bayt? By God, our follower (Shi'ah) is none except him who is wary of God and obeys him… So fear God and work for the sake of that which is with God. There is no kinship between God and anyone. The most preferred and honored of creatures before God, the Exalted, are those who are most .Godwary amongst them and arc most obedient to His commands in their conduct

O Jabir, by God, one

cannot attain nearness to God except through obedience. We do not possess any guarantees of bara'ah (acquittal) from hellfire and none has an argument against God. Whoever is obedient to God is our friend (wali) and whoever is disobedient to God is our enemy, Our wilayah cannot be attained except through works and piety."(١)

Also, in the noble al-Kafi it is reported with a chain of authorities from Imam al-Baqir, Baqir al-Ulum, (A) that he said:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: يَا مَعْشَرَ الشِّيعَهِ شِيعَهِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كُونُوا النَّمْرَقَهَ الوُسْطَى يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْكُمُ الغَالِي وَيَلْحَقُ بِكُمُ التَّالِي. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الأَنْصارِ، يُقَالُ لَهُ سَعْدٌ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، مَا الغَالِي؟ قَالَ: قَوْمٌ يَقُولُونَ فِينَا مَا لا نَقُولُهُ فِي أَنْفُسِنَا، فَلَيْسَ أُولَئِكَ مِنَّا وَلَسْنَا مِنْهُمْ. قَالَ: فَمَا التَّالِي؟ قَالَ: المُرْتَادُ يُرِيدُ الخَيْرَ، يُبَلِّغُهُ الخَيْرَ يُوجَرُ عَلَيْهِ. ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا فَقَالَ: وَاللهِ مَا مَعَنَا مِنَ اللهِ بَرَاءَهٌ وَلا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ اللهِ قَرَابَهٌ وَلا لَنَا عَلَى اللهِ حُجَّهٌ وَلا نَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللهِ إلاّ بِالطَّاعَهِ. فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مُطِيعاً للهِ تَنْفَعُهُ وَلايَتُنَا، وَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ عَاصِياً للهِ لَمْ تَنْفَعْهُ وَلايَتُنَا. وَيْحَكُمْ لا تَغْتَرُّوا، وَيْحَكُمْ لا تَغْتَرُّوا.

"O community of the followers of the Household of Muhammad (S)! You should be those who represent the golden mean, to whom the extremists (ghali) must return and to whom those who lag behind (tali) must catch up."

A man named Sa'd belonging to the Ansar said to him, "My I be your ransom, what is an extremist (ghali)?" The Imam replied, "They are a group who say things about us that we

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١- Usul al-Kaf i, ii, ٧۴, hadith ٣.

do not claim for ourselves. Therefore, they do not belong to us and we do not belong ".to them

Then he asked, "What is a tali?" The imam replied, "It is one who seeks guidance but does not know its way, though he wants to work and attain goodness." Then the Imam, turning to his followers (Shi'is) said, "By God, we do not have any warrant (bara'ah) to save you from God's (wrath and punishment) and there is no kinship between God and us. We do not have any arguments before God and we do not attain nearness to Him except though obedience and compliance (to His commands). Anyone of you who obeys God will be benefited by our wilayah and friendship, but our wilayah will be of no avail to anyone among you who is disobedient to God. Woe to (you, should you be conceited. Woe to you, should you be conceited."(۱

,It is also narrated in the noble al-Kafi that Imam al-Baqir (A) said

The Messenger of Allah (S) once stood on the rock of Safa and addressing his" kinsman said, "O descendents of Hashim! O children of 'Abd al-Muttalib! I am the Apostle of Allah sent to you, and I having loving concern for you. Verily, my works belong to me and the works of each of you belong to him. Do not say that 'Muhammad is our kinsman and soon we will be let in wherever he enters.' No, by God, O sons of 'Abd al-Muttalib! My friends, from

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.Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۷۵, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-ta'ah wa al-taqwa," hadith ۶ -۱

amongst you and the others, are none except the pious. Let it be known to you that I will not recognize you on the Day of Resurrection [as one of my Ummah] when you come carrying the world [i.e. the works done by you for the love of the world) on your backs while other people come to the bearing the Hereafter [i.e. the works done by them in faith and for the life of the Hereafter)."(۱)

And it is also mentioned in the foregoing narration of Jabir that Imam al-Baqir (A) said:

O Jabir, do not let false doctrines and opinions deceive you into imagining that the love of 'Ali (A) is sufficient for you. Can it be sufficient for a man to declare, "I befriend 'Ali (A) and am an adherent of his wilayah," without being diligent and without working much (good) works? Truly, were he to say that I love the Messenger of Allah (and the Messenger of Allah was better than 'Ali) while neglecting to follow him in his conduct (sirah) and failing to act in accordance with his sunnah, his love would not be of any avail to him.(۲)

There is a famous episode that once Tawus (a companion of the Fourth Imam) heard someone crying, lamenting, and pleading. The cries continued until they ceased and it appeared as if the one who was lamenting had fallen unconscious. On approaching, he saw that it was Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A). He took the Imam's head into his arms,

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۱- Rawdat al-Kafi, viii, ۱۸۲, hadith ۲۰۵.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۷۴, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab al-ta'ah wa al-taqwa," hadith ۳.

and said to him: "You are the son of the Messenger of Allah and the beloved of Fatima Zahra'. After all the paradise belongs to you!" He said these words in order to console the Imam. That master replied, "God has created paradise for one who worships Him and obeys him, even if it were an Ethiopian slave, and He has created the hell for those who disobey him even if it were a Qurayshite" (or the chief of the Quraysh)!(١)

These were solve of the sacred traditions, clear and explicit, suggesting the falsity and wrongness of these false hopes of ours, as sinners and lovers of the world-hopes which derive from satanic longings and are contrary to reason and revelation (naql).

Add to these the noble Qur'anic verses, such as these statements of God, the Exalted:

(كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ.)

(Every sold is pledged for what it has earned. (٧۴:٣٨)

And such statements of God, the Exalted, as:

(فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَه. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَه.)

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it. (٩٩:٧-٨)

And such other statements as:

(لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ.)

(For it (the soul) is what it has earned and against it is what it has merited. (٢:٢٨۶)

And there are other noble verses besides, present on every page of the Divine Scripture, and to explain them away or to meddle with their meaning is contrary to (logical) necessity.

As against these, there are other traditions which are

.Bihar al-anwar, vol. ۴۶. pp. ۸۱-۸۲, "Ta'rikh 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A)," bab ۵, hadith ۷۵ -۱

also recorded in authentic books but which are, as a rule, capable of reconciliation [with the above mentioned traditions]. And even if a reconciliation should appear to be unsatisfactory and were they not susceptible to reinterpretation (ta'wil), it is neither in accordance with sound reason or the interest (darurah) of Muslims to go against all these authentic (sahih), explicit, and muttawatir traditions which are confirmed by the literal meanings of the Qur'an and the unambiguous texts of the Furqan.

Among these traditions is that which has been narrated by the Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni with his chain of authorities from Yusuf ibn Thabit ibn Abi Said from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said:

الإيمَانُ لا يَضُرُّ مَعَهُ عَمَلٌ وَكَذَلِكَ الكُفْرُ لا يَنْفَعُ مَعَهُ عَمَلٌ.

Nothing can harm one by the side of faith, and nothing call benefit one by the side of unbelief. (kufr)(1)

There are several other traditions bearing this theme,(2) The honored traditionist Majlisi (M) has interpreted this group of traditions with the suggestion that the 'harm' [in the above tradition] means 'entry into hellfire' or 'remaining in hell for ever.'(3)

This interpretation-that what is meant by 'harm' is entry into hell-does not preclude (that it might be accompanied with) other torments in Barzakh (Purgatory) and in the halts of the Day of Resurrection.

This writer thinks that these traditions may be interpreted as implying that faith illumines the heart is such a manner that if supposedly an error or sin is committed by man it is compensated, by the means of the

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1- Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۴۶۴ "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab anna al-iman la yadurru ma'ahu sayyi'ah," hadith ۴.

2- Usul al-Kaf i, hadith ۳, ۵-۶.

3- Al-Majlisi, Mir'at al-uqul, xi, ۳۹۶, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab anna al-iman la

.yadurru ma’ahu sayyi’ah,” hadith ٢

light and faculty of faith, with repentance and penitent return to God, and the person possessing faith in God and the Hereafter does not leave his works unattended until the Day of Reckoning.

On this basis, these traditions, in fact, exhort one to hold on to faith and to remain in the state of faith, like a similar tradition narrated in the noble al-Kafi from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that Moses (A) said to Khidr (A) "I have been honored by your company. Give me some counsel." Khidr said to him, "Hold on to that with which nothing would harm you and without which nothing will be of any benefit to you."(۱)

عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ مُوسَی لِلْخَضِرِ عَلَیْهِمَا السَّلامُ: قَدْ تَحَرَّمْتُ بِصُحْبَتِکَ فَأَوْصِنِی. قَالَ لَهُ: إلْزَمْ مَا لا یَضُرُّکَ مَعَهُ شَیْءٌ کَمَا لا یَنْفَعُکَ مَعَ غَیْرِهِ شَیْءٌ.

And among these is this tradition:

بإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الرَّیَّانِ بْنِ الصَّلْتِ رَفَعَهُ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: کَانَ أَمِیرُ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ کَثِیراً مَا یَقُولُ فِی خِطْبَتِهِ: یَا أَیُّهَا النَّاسُ، دِینَکُمْ دِینَکُمْ! فَإِنَّ السَّیِّئَهَ فِیهِ خَیْرٌ مِنَ الحَسَنَهِ فِی غَیْرِهِ, وَالسَّیِّئَهُ فِیهِ تُغْفَرُ وَالحَسَنَهُ فِی غَیْرِهِ لا تُقْبَلُ.

Al-Kulayni reports with his chain of authorities from Muhammad ibn al Rayyan ibn al-Salt, who narrates in a marfu' tradition from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: The Commander of the Faithful (A) often used to say in his sermons, "O people! Take care of your creed (din)! Take care of your creed! For a vice committed in it is better than

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۴۶۴, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," bab anna al-iman la yadurru ma'ahu sayyi'ah," hadith ۲.

a virtue performed outside it. The vice committed in it is forgiven, and the virtue performed without it is not accepted."(1)

This noble tradition and others like it, whose aim is to exhort people to follow the right religion, imply that the vices of the faithful and the followers of the true religion are ultimately pardoned, as God says:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا.)

(Verily, God would pardon all sins. (39: 53

It is on this basis that it may be said that their vices are better than the virtues of others, which are never accepted (by God). Perhaps, acts of virtue which lack the conditions of acceptance, such as faith (iman) and wilayah, possess a greater darkness. In brief, this tradition does not imply that the faithful are quit of their vices.

One of them is the famous tradition which is said to be welt-known (mashhur) amongst both the groups (i.e. the Shi'ah and the Sunnis):

حُبُّ عَلِيٍّ حَسَنَةٌ لا تَضُرُّ مَعَهَا سَيِّئَةٌ وَبُغْضُهُ سَيِّئَةٌ لا تَنْفَعُ مَعَهَا حَسَنَةٌ.

The love of 'Ali is a virtue by whose side no sin is harmful, and his enmity is a vice with which no virtue is of any benefit.(2)

This noble tradition is similar to the hadith mentioned earlier concerning faith (iman). Its meaning is either in accordance with the probability suggested by marhum Majlisi, that the meaning of 'harm' is eternal confinement in hell or entry into it.

That is, the love of that master is the essence of faith, its perfection and completion, which results in one's

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1- Usul al-Kaf i, ii, 464, hadith 6.

2- Al-Manaqib, iii, 197.

being rescued from hell with the means of the intercession of the Intercessors. This interpretation, as pointed our earlier, does not preclude one's having to undergo the various torments of the Purgatory (Barzakh), as stated in a hadith where [the Imam] has said, "We shall intercede for you on the Day of Resurrection, but the care of your life in the Purgatory is up to yourselves."(1)

Or it means what we have mentioned, that the love of that master results in the emergence of a luminosity and faculty [of faith] in the heart that prompt one to refrain from sins. And should one become afflicted with sin on occasion, he would remedy it through repentance and penitence, not allowing the matter to get out of hand and not permitting the carnal self to break loose its reins.

Moreover, there is a group of traditions that are cited under the following noble verse of the Surat al-Furqan:

(وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا. يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ مُهَانًا. إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُوْلَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.)

The servants of the All-merciful are those...] who call not upon another god with God,] nor slay the soul God has forbidden except by right, neither fornicate for whosoever does that shall meet the price of sin doubled shall be the chastisement for him on the Resurrection Day, and he

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1- Al-Manaqib, hadith ۴, footnote No. ۳۳.

shall dwell therein humbled, save him who repents, and believes, and does righteous work those, God shall change their evil deeds into good deeds, for God is ever All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (۲۵:۶۸-۷۰)

There are numerous traditions that are cited (in exegeses) under this verse and we shall confine ourselves to citing only one of them, for they are quite close to one another in meaning and content:

عَنِ الشَّيْخِ فِى أَمَالِيهِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ الثَّقَفِيِّ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (فَأُوْلَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.) فَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يُؤْتَى بِالمُؤْمِنِ المُذْنِبِ يَوْمَ القِيَامَهِ حَتَّى يُقَامَ بِمَوْقِفِ الحِسَابِ، فَيَكُونُ اللهُ تَعَالَى هُوَ الَّذِى يَتَوَلَّى حِسَابَهُ لا يُطْلِعُ عَلَى حِسَابِهِ أَحَداً مِنَ النَّاسِ. فَيُعَرِّفُهُ ذُنُوبَهُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَقَرَّ بِسَيِّئَاتِهِ قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِلْكَتَبَهِ: بَدِّلُوهَا حَسَنَاتٍ وَأَظْهِرُوهَا لِلنَّاسِ. فَيَقُولُ النَّاسُ حِينَئِذٍ: أَمَا كَانَ لِهَذَا الْعَبْدِ سَيِّئَهٌ وَاحِدَهٌ؟ ثُمَّ يَأْمُرُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ إِلَى الجَنَّهِ. فَهَذَا تَأْوِيلُ الآيَهِ. وَهِىَ فِى المُذْنِبِينَ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا خَاصَّهً.

Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, in his Amali, reports with his chain of authorities from the highly regarded traditionist Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafi (R) that he narrated: I asked Abu Ja’far, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (A) concerning the statement of God, Almighty and Glorious, “Those, God will change their evil deeds into good deeds, and God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.” He replied: The sinful believer will be brought on the Day of Resurrection until he is made to stand in the halt of reckoning. The God, the Exalted, Himself would take

charge of his reckoning and none of mankind will come to know about his account of deeds. Then He will inform the believer of his sins that he may confesses to his sins. God, the Almighty and the Glorious, shall say to the scribes the angels who write men's deeds, "Change them into good deeds and disclose them to the people." Thereat people will say, "This servant did not perpetrate a single sin!" Then God shall order him to be escorted into paradise. This is the interpretation (ta'wil) of the verse, (and that relates particularly to the sinners from amongst our followers (Shi'ah).(١)

The reason for citing the above noble verse completely and prolonging the discussion is that the topic is of a major importance and many of the sermonizers (ahl al-minbar) interpret such traditions in a misleading manner for the people. Their connection with the noble verse would not have been revealed without the citation of the noble verse. .On this basis, I am compelled to protract the discussion, even if it should be tiresome

If one were to study the latter part of the verse, one would know that all people are absolutely responsible for their deeds and accountable for their ugly actions, excepting those who attain faith and repent for their sins and perform righteous deeds. This is how Imam al-Baqir (A) has explained the verse, describing the character of the reckoning of such persons, which, however, is special to the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt and other people

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.Al-Amali, p. ٧٠, juz' ٣ -١

.do not partake of it

That is because [true] faith is not realized except with the wilayah of ‘Ali and his infallible and pure successors, awsiya’ (A). Rather, faith in God and the Messenger would not be accepted without wilayah, as will be mentioned in the next section, God willing. Hence this noble verse and the traditions relating to its interpretation must be considered as belonging to the primary proofs, for they imply that if a person should possess faith and should he compensate for his sins with repentance and righteous .deeds, he would not be covered by this verse

Hence, my dear, let not Satan delude you and let not carnal appetites deceive you. Of course, a lazy person afflicted with lusts and the love of the world, property, and position-such as this author-is always after finding some pretext in order to justify his laziness. He turns to anything that agrees with his appetites and affirms his carnal lusts and satanic imaginings, opening his eyes and ears to it without delving into its .real meaning and without considering that which contradicts it and is opposite to it

Poor man, he imagines that he is, God forbid, permitted every unlawful act and is untouched by the pen of accountability, na’udubillah, at the mere claim of being a Shi’ah and attached to the Household of Purity and Infallibility. Wretched man! he does not know that Satan has made him blind. There is always the danger that this hollow and futile love would

also slip out of his hands at the end of his life and he would be resurrected empty-handed within the ranks of the enemies (nawasib) of the Ahl al-Bayt. The claim of love is not acceptable from someone who has no proof to substantiate it. It is not possible that I may love you and be sincerely attached to you while my conduct is contrary to all your goals and objectives. The fruit of true love is deeds that are in harmony with that love. And should it lack this fruit, one must know that it was not [real] love but only .an imaginary fancy

The Noble Messenger and his honored Household (A) spent all their lives in disseminating the law, morality and doctrines [of Islam] and their sole objective was to communicate the commands of God and to reform and refine human beings. They willingly bore hardships when they were killed, plundered, and insulted in the way of these goals and did not flinch from marching ahead. Hence their follower (Shi'ah) and lover (mu'hibb) is one who shares their objectives, moves in their footsteps, and .follows their traditions

The fact that verbal confession and practical action have been considered as essential elements (muqawwimat) of faith in the noble traditions is a natural secret and a prevailing law of God, because the reality of faith is essentially associated with expression and action. It is intrinsic in the nature of the lover to express his love and passionate yearning (taghazzul) for the

Beloved, and to act as required by faith and the love of God and His awliya'. If someone does not act, he does not have faith and love. And his apparent faith and his hollow and soulless love would be wiped out by some slight accident, including the pressures [of the deathbed and the grave] and one would enter the abode of .retribution empty-handed

Wilayah Of The Ahl Al-Bayt, The Condition For Acceptability Of Works

That which is implied by the latter part of the noble tradition [being expounded]-that wilayah and ma'rifah are prerequisites for the acceptance of works-is a matter that is one of the definite, or rather necessary, doctrines of the sacred Shi'i religion. The traditions on this topic are too numerous to be cited in these brief expositions and their number exceeds the limits of tawatur. However, we shall cite some of them in :these pages for tabarruk's sake

الكَافِى بِإسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: ذَرْوَهُ الأمْرِ وَسَنَامُهُ وَمِفْتَاحُهُ وَبَابُ الأَشْيَاءِ وَرِضَا الرَّحْمَنِ الطَّاعَهُ لْلإمَام بَعْدَ مَعْرِفَتِهِ... أَمَا لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلاً قَامَ لَيْلَهُ وَصَامَ نَهَارَهُ وَتَصَدَّقَ بِجَمِيعِ مَالِهِ وَحَجَّ جَمِيعَ دَهْرِهِ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ وِلايَهَ وَلِيِّ اللهِ فَيُوَالِيَهُ وَيَكُونَ جَمِيعَ أَعْمَالِهِ بِدَلالَتِهِ إلَيْهِ، مَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَقٌّ فِى ثَوَابِهِ وَلا كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الإيمَانِ.

Al-Kulayni in al-Kafi reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said: The crux of the matter, and its key, the door of things and the pleasure of the Beneficent—all lie in obedience to the Imam after having known him... Be aware that the man who spends his nights in

prayer and his days in fasting and gives as all his property as charity (sadaqah) and performs hajj throughout his life without knowing the wilayah of the Wali of God and without following him, and without conducting himself, in all his actions, according to his guidance—such a person has no right to any reward from God and is not one of the faithful.(١)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: مَنْ لَمْ یَأْتِ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ یَوْمَ الْقِیَامَهِ بِمَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَیْهِ لَمْ یُتَقَبَّلْ مِنْهُ حَسَنَهٌ وَلَمْ یُتَجَاوَزْ عَنْهُ سَیِّئَهٌ.

In Wasa'il al-Shi'ah it is recorded with a chain of authorities from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Whoever does not come to God, the Almighty and the Glorious, on the Day of Resurrection with a creed that you follow, no virtue of his will be accepted nor will any sin of his be overlooked."(٢)

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ –فِی حَدِیثٍ– قَالَ: وَاللهِ لَوْ أَنَّ إِبْلِیسَ سَجَدَ لِلهِ بَعْدَ الْمَعْصِیهِ وَالتَّکَبُّرِ عُمُرَ الدُّنْیَا مَا نَفَعَهُ ذَلِکَ وَلا قَبِلَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا لَمْ یَسْجُدْ لآدَمَ کَمَا أَمَرَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ یَسْجُدَ لَهُ. وَکَذَلِکَ هَذِهِ الأُمَّهُ الْعَاصِیَهُ الْمَفْتُونَهُ بَعْدَ تَرْکِهِمُ الإِمَامَ الَّذِی نَصَبَهُ نَبِیُّهُمْ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَهُمْ: فَلَنْ یَقْبَلَ اللهُ لَهُمْ عَمَلاً وَلَنْ یَرْفَعَ لَهُمْ حَسَنَهً حَتَّی یَأْتُوا اللهَ مِنْ حَیْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ وَیَتَوَلَّوا الإِمَامَ الَّذِی أُمِرُوا بِوِلایَتِهِ وَیَدْخُلُوا مِنَ الْبَابِ الَّذِی فَتَحَهُ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ لَهُمْ.

In Wasa'il al-Shi'ah it is reported, in a hadith, with a chain of authorities from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "By

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١- Usul al-Kafi, ii, ١٩, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bib da'aim al-Islam," hadith ٥.

٢- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, i, ٩١, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab muqaddimat al-ibadat," hadith ٣.

God, were Iblis -may God damn him- to prostrate to God for as long as the world lasts after his disobedience and pride, that would not benefit him, and God would not accept it as long as he does not prostrate to Adam as commanded by God, the Almighty and the Glorious. The same applies to this disobedient and misguided Ummah after its abandoning the Imam appointed for them by their Prophet. Hence God will not accept any of their acts nor elevate any of their good works unless they carry out what God has commanded them and follow the Imam, to whose authority (wilayah) they have been commanded by God to submit, and enter through the door that God and His Messenger have opened for them..."(۱)

There are many traditions bearing this theme and it may be inferred from all of them that the recognition of wilayah is a condition for the acceptability of works, or, rather, that it is the condition for the acceptability of faith in God and the prophethood of the honored Prophet (S). However, as to its being a condition for the validity of the works, as stated by some scholars, that is not certain. Rather, that which is apparent is that it is not a condition, as is suggested by many traditions, such as the tradition concerning the non-necessity of the repetition (qada') of his acts of worship by a convert to Shi'ism (mustabsir).

Excepting the zakat, which he had given during the period of his

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۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, i, ۹۱, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab muqaddimat al-ibadat," p. ۹۲, hadith ۵.

error to those who did not deserve it, he is not required to perform the qada of his other acts of worship and God would reward him for them.(۱) It is mentioned in another tradition that "other acts such as prayer, fasts, hajj, and sadaqah would join you and follow you excepting the zakat, which was paid earlier to those who had no right to receive it and has to be paid to its deserving recipients."(۲) And it is mentioned in some traditions that the acts [of the Ummah] are presented to the Messenger of God (S) on Thursdays, and God, the Exalted, reviews them on the Day of 'Arafah and makes them all like dust scattered. The Imam was asked as to who are the persons whose acts are thus treated. The Imam replied that they are the acts of those who are hostile to its and hostile to our followers.(۳)

And this tradition, as is clear, implies the (legal) validity and non-acceptability of the acts. In any case, the pursuit of this matter is beyond our present purpose. And all praise belongs to God, firstly and lastly.

Thirty-Fourth Hadith: The Station of The Faithful Before God

point

بالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى ثِقَهِ الإسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى قُدِّسَ سِرُّهُ عَنْ عِدَّهٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ إسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ مَهْرَانَ عَنْ أَبِى سَعِيدٍ القَمَّاطِ عَنْ أَبَانَ بْنِ تَغْلُبَ عَنْ أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: لَمَّا أُسْرِىَ بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ: يَا رَبِّ، مَا حَالُ المُؤْمِنِ عِنْدَکَ؟ قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، مَنْ أَهَانَ لِى وَلِيّاً فَقَدْ

۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, i, ۹۱, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab muqaddimat al-ibadat," p. ۹۷, bab ۳۱, hadith ۱.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, i, ۹۱, "kitab al-taharah," "abwab muqaddimat al-ibadat": "أمَّا الصَّلاهُ وَالصَّوْمُ وَالصَّدَقَهُ فَإنَّ اللهَ يَتْبَعُكُمَا ذَلِکَ وَيَلْحَقُ بِکُمَا. وَأمّا الزَّکَاهُ فَلا، لأَنَّکُمَا أَبْعَدْتُمَا حَقَّ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ وَأَعْطَيْتُمَاهُ غَيْرَهُ.

۳- Bihar al-anwar, xxiii, ۳۴۵, "kitab Imamah," bab ۲۰, hadith ۳۷. ...إنَّ أعْمَالَ العِبَادِ تُعْرَضُ کُلَّ خَمِيسٍ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، فَإذَا کَانَ يَوْمُ عَرَفَه هَبَطَ الرَّبُّ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَى؛ وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللهِ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَى: (وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَى مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا.) فَقُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاکَ؛ أَعْمَالُ مَنْ هَذِهِ؟ قَالَ: أَعْمَالُ مُبْغِضِينَا وَمُبْغِضِى شِيعَتِنَا.

بَارَزَنی بِالمُحَارَبَهِ وَأَنَا أَسْرَعُ شَیْءٍ إِلَی نُصْرَهِ أَوْلِیَائِی. وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَیْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ کَتَرَدُّدِی عَنْ وَفَاهِ الْمُؤْمِنِ؛ یَکْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَکْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ. وَإِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِی الْمُؤْمِنِینَ مَنْ لا یُصْلِحُهُ إِلاّ الغِنَی، وَلَوْ صَرَفْتُهُ إِلَی غَیْرِ ذَلِکَ لَهَلَکَ. وَإِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِی الْمُؤْمِنِینَ مَنْ لا یُصْلِحُهُ إِلاّ الفَقْرُ وَلَوْ صَرَفْتُهُ إِلَی غَیْرِ ذَلِکَ لَهَلَکَ. وَمَا یَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَیَّ عَبْدٌ مِنْ عِبَادِی بِشَیْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَیَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَیْهِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَیَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَیَّ بِالنَّافِلَهِ حَتَّی أُحِبُّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ کُنْتُ إِذاً سَمْعَهُ الَّذِی یَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِی یُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَلِسَانَهُ الَّذِی یَنْطِقُ بِهِ وَیَدَهُ الَّتِی یَبْطِشُ بِهَا؛ إِنْ دَعَانِی أَجَبْتُهُ وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِی أَعْطَیْتُهُ.

With a chain of authorities reaching up to the Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya’qub at-Kulayni (Q) from several of our companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from Isma’il ibn Mihran, from Abu Said al-Qummat, from Aban ibn Taghlib, from Abu Ja’far (A) that he said, “When the Prophet (S) was taken on his [celestial] journey, he said to God: My Lord, what is the state of the believer before Thee? He replied: O Muhammad, indeed whoever humiliates a friend of mine declares a war against me and I am the swiftest of all in the aid of My friends. And I am not so hesitant in any thing that I do as when taking the life of the faithful person who hates death, and I hate to vex him. And indeed there are those amongst My faithful servants whom nothing can reform except wealth, and should I turn them towards something other than that

they would perish. And indeed there are those amongst my faithful servants whom nothing would reform except poverty, and if I were to change their state from what it is they would perish. And there is nothing dearer among things that bring a servant of Mine near to Me than the obligations that I have assigned to him. And indeed he draws nearer to Me gradually through supererogatory acts until I love him, and when I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears, the sight wherewith he sees, the tongue wherewith he speaks, and the hand wherewith he holds, and if he calls Me, I answer him, and if he asks Me I grant him.(۱)

Exposition

The verb أُسْرِىَ is in the passive sense and means being taken on a night of a journey. Al-Jawhari says:

سَريتُ سُرىً ومَسرًى وَأسرَيتُ بمعنى إذا سِرتُ ليلاً، وبالألف لغهُ أهلِ الحِجازِ.

Hence, a journey by night is called إسراء (isra'). The descriptive [expression by night,' laylan, used with the verb asra] in the noble verse:

(سُبْحَانَ الَّذِى أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا.)

(Glorified is He who took His servant on a night journey. (۱۷:۱

is either, as stated by Shaykh Baha'i,(۲) for the purpose of indicating the short period of the night journey by the means of the indefinite (tankir) laylan, because the journey between the Masjid al-Haram and the Masjid al-Aqsa takes forty nights. Or it is based on abstraction (tajrid) meant for the purpose of conveying the same sense. In the phrase لَمَّا أُسْرِىَ بِالنَّبِىِّ ('when the

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۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, ii, ۳۵۲, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab man adha al-muslimin wa ahtaqarahum," hadith ۸.

۲- Al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Arba'in, hadith ۳۵, p. ۲۹۶.

Prophet was taken on the nightly journey') the related explanatory phrases-'towards the station of Divine proximity for instance'-have been omitted due to their being .understood

means, 'what station and worth does the believer have ما حال المؤمن The expression conveys the sense of despising, أهانه، من أهان لى ولياً before Thee?' In the expression :making light of, scorning, vilifying

أهَانَهُ: أى استَخفَّ به واسْتَهانَ به. وتهَاونَ به أى استَحقَره. يُقال: رجُلٌ فيه مَهانَه.

refers to the verb, in which case it would mean making (لى) in ل_ Apparently the prefix light of a believer for his faith in God and for the sake of God, the Exalted. It is also possible that it relates to wali; in which case, that which is meant is 'making light of in .the absolute sense, for any reason whatsoever. Wali here means friend and intimate

:means to go out بارز، بارزنى In the expression

بَرزَ الرَّجُل يبرزُ بُروزاً، أى خَرجَ.

.And here it means to commence hostility and to go to war or to declare it

meaning causing distress ,ساء is the verbal noun (masdar mimi) of مساءته The expression .and vexation

:In regard to the statement

إنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِى المُؤْمِنِينَ مَنْ لا يُصْلِحُهُ إلاّ الغِنَى: أى ذُلٌّ وضَعفٌ.

the authoritative Shaykh Baha'i (M) says: The rules of grammar require that the should be the subject (ism) and the genitive (مَـن .relative pronoun (mawsul, i.e its predicate (khabar); (مِن عبادى .proposition and the genitive clause (jarr wa majrur, i.e but it is obvious that the intent is not to say that those whom

.nothing but poverty can reform are some of the servants, but rather the contrary

Therefore, it is better to consider the adverbial clause as the subject and the relative pronoun as the predicate. And although this is contrary to general usage, the like of it :has been considered permissible by some, as in the statement of God, the Exalted

(وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا...)

Here ends his statement.)(۱) Perhaps in such cases the subject (mubtada') is elliptical) and the genitive proposition is indicative of the elision. In such a case it would also not be contrary to the rules of grammar. And it is narrated from the author of al-Kashshaf [i.e. al-Zamakhshari](۲) that [in such cases] the genitive pronoun and the clause in the genitive case are interpreted to be the subject. On the basis of that which has been .said, there is also no need of any interpretation

We should know that this statement, here, is meant to dispel a doubt and to answer a question that might arise in the minds of some people who do not have the understanding of the perfect divine order [of creation] and the concealed Divine providence. That [doubt and question] is that if the faithful have such a worth and station before God, the Exalted, why do they fall into poverty and destitution? And if the world does not have any worth, why do some of them become rich and wealthy. It answers by saying that the states of My servants and the conditions of

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Arba'in, hadith ۳۵, p. ۲۹۶.,

۲- Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir al-kashaf, i, ۱۶۷, exegesis of ۲:۸.

.their hearts are different

There are some whom nothing except poverty would reform, and I make him poor to reform their state. And there are some whom nothing would reform except wealth and self-sufficiency, and so I make them rich. Both of these states signify the nobility, honor, and dignity that the man of faith has in the sacred presence of God, the .Blessed and the Exalted

The sentence وَمَا يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدٌ مِنْ عِبَادِی... ('and there is nothing dearer among things that bring a servant of Mine nearer to Me . . . ') and the following sentence describe the .station of nearness of the Perfect in faith

It is as if this hadith, wherein the state of the faithful is described for the Noble Messenger (S), first begins by giving a brief description of the state of the faithful in general, that whoever despises them declares war against God. Then, it divides the .faithful into two classes, or rather three, in accordance with the way of the gnostics

One of them referred to is the generality of the faithful, from the phrase 'And I am not so hesitant…,' up to where He says: 'And there is nothing dearer among things…' That is because they detest death, and wealth and poverty causes their hearts to swerve. These two are not the characteristics of the Perfect (kummal) but refer to the .ordinary among the faithful

Accordingly, the literal import of the tradition poses no problem and it does not conflict with other noble

traditions which state that the Sincere amongst the faithful do not have aversion for death. Hence, there is no need for the answer cited by Shaykh Bahai from the Shaykh (al-Shahid (R). Anyone interested in it should refer to Shaykh Baha'i's Arba'in.(١)

Secondly, the tradition describes the state of the Perfect from where it says, "There is nothing among the things that bring a servant of Mine near to Me... (وَمَا يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدٌ مِنْ عِبَادِي...), up to the end of the hadith. In the view of the gnostics, these sentences relate to two different groups. One of them consists of those who obtain the nearness relating to obligatory duties (fara'idh) and the other consists of those who obtain the nearness associated with the supererogatory acts of worship (nawafil),(٢) and the closing part of the tradition refers to their station and the result of their nearness. .Later, God willing, we will briefly refer to each of these two stations

As to the word يبطش, al-Jawhari says that batshah means domination and taking by :force

البَطشَةُ، السَّطوهُ والأخذُ بالعُنف، وقد بَطَشَ به يبطَشُ ويبطُشُ بطشاً.

Here, however, that which is meant is taking hold of (akhdh), in general, and, apparently, the general sense of 'taking hold of is that which is meant by the word in .common usage

A Noteworthy Point

The learned Shaykh Baha'i (M) says, "The Chain of authorities of this hadith is sahih [authentic], and it is a tradition 'well-known (mashhur) among the Shi'is (khassah) as well as the generality Ammah, i.e. the Sunnis], who have

p: ٩١١

١- Al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Arba'in, hadith ٣٥.

٢- Author's Note: Shaykh Baha'i (r) says: "The (term) nawafil refers to the non-obligatory works that are performed for God's good pleasure. Its specific use to refer to prayers became customary later on." p. ٤٩٠.

narrated it in their sihah with a slight 'variation." Thereafter, he cites the tradition with a slight difference [of Wording] from their sihah. In the gloss on the Arba'in, he remarks, "One of 'the 'several' mentioned in the chain of authorities of the tradition is 'Ali ibn 'Ibrahim, and for this reason, this narration is sahih. The 'Ammah have also transmitted it through a sahih chain of authorities, and this is a tradition that is mashhur and considered authentic by the consensus (muttafaq 'alayh) of all followers (of Islam.'(١)

Interpretation Of The 'Hesitation' Ascribed To God

We have already explained matters relating to the contempt of the faithful: earlier while expounding one of the traditions,(٢) and there is no need to repeat it here. Here .we will explain some other expressions relating to the tradition

It should be known that that which is mentioned in this noble tradition concerning the ascription of hesitation (tardid, tarddud) to God, the Exalted, and similar other matters that are mentioned in sahih traditions, or rather even in the wise Divine scripture-such as the attribution of change of intent (bada) or testing (imtihan) to God, the Exalted-have been interpreted by the ulama in accordance with their own approach and creed. The august Shaykh Baha'i (R) has given three interpretations of it in his .book Arba'in, to which we will refer briefly

First, that there is a concealed condition (idmar) in the statement, meaning 'if it were possible for Me to hesitate.' Second, since it is common among people to hesitate in offending those whom

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Al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Arba'in, hadith ٣٥, p. ٢٩٥, Cf. al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, vol ٢٣, p. ٢٢, -١ .''kitab al-ruqaq,'' and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. ۶, p. ٢۵۶

.See the exposition of the Nineteenth Hadith -٢

they respect, a hesitation which they do not show for others, it is valid to mention hesitation as a metaphorical substitute for respect. What is meant is, 'None of the creatures have such worth and respect before Me as a faithful person has.'

The third interpretation is that God, the Exalted, as mentioned in traditions, reveals the favors and the good news to the faithful servant at the time of death to remove his aversion towards death and to awaken in him a desire for the abode of permanence. Hence He has likened this state to the state of one who wants to subject his friend to a pain which is followed by a great benefit. Such a one hesitates as to how to inflict this pain so that the friend suffers the least. Thus he continues to appeal and allure until he obtains acceptance.(١)

An 'Irfani Explanation

The way of the philosophers and the gnostics in this and similar issues is a different one. We shall refrain from elaborating it due to its being remote from [ordinary] understanding and will not discuss its [metaphysical] premises. We shall mention only as much as can be educative and accords with spirituality.

It should be known that all the planes of existence, from the ultimate heights of Malakut and the last peaks of Jabarut to the lowest depths of the world of darkness and prime matter, are manifestation of Divine Beauty and Glory (jamal wa jalal) and the degrees of the manifestations of God's Lordship. No being

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١- Al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Arba'in, hadith ٣٥, p. ٣١١٠.

has any independence of its own and everything is sheer dependence, relation, poverty, and attachment to the sacred being of the Absolute Real. All of them are absolutely subject to the sovereignty of God and submissive to the Divine commands. Accordingly, there are many references to this matter in the Qur'anic verses. God, the :Exalted, has said

(وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى.)

(And when thou threwest, it was not thou that threw, but God threw. (۸:۱۷

This affirmation and negation refers to the position of amr bayn al-amrayn.(۱) It means that you have indeed thrown (the lance), but at the same time it was not your ego that performed the act of throwing independently. Rather, it was with the manifestation of the power of God in the mirror of thy existence and through the influence of His Power in the Mulk and the Malakut of thy being that the throwing .occurred

Hence you are the thrower, and at the same time it is God, Glorious and Exalted, Who is the thrower. An example of it are the noble verses of the blessed Surat al-Kahf, in the story of Moses and Khidr (A) where Hadrat Khidr explains the mystery behind his actions. In one case involving a defect [i.e. where Khidr makes a hole in the boat], he .ascribes it to himself

In one case, which involved perfection, he ascribes it to God. In another case, he ascribes the act to both himself and to God. In one place he says أردتُ

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۱ - This phrase refers to the doctrinal position of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in respect of the issue of jabr (predestination) and tafwid. The phrase, meaning 'the matter between the two matters,' implies that neither jabr is true nor tafwid; the truth lies between these two extremes positions. (Tr.)

أردْنا Thy Lord wished), and in yet another place) أرادَ ربُّک I wished), in another place) (We wished), and all of these [ascriptions] were correct.(۱)

:Of the same kind is the statement of God, the Exalted

(اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا.)

(God takes the souls at tire time of their death, (۳۹:۴۲

Although it is the Angel of Death who is charged with, according to another Qur'anic .verse, the taking of the souls

(يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ.)

(He leads astray whoever He will and guides whoever He will. (۱۶:۹۳

it is God, the Exalted, who is the guide (al-hadi) and it is He who leads astray (al- :(mudill), although the guides are Gabriel (Jibra'il) and the Noble Messenger (S

(إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ.)

(Thou are only a warner and a guide to every people.(۲

.and it is Satan who misleads

Similarly, it is the Divine breath that sounds the trumpet of Hadrat Israfil through the .blowing of Israfil

From one viewpoint, what are Israfil, 'Izra'il and Jibra'il and Muhammad (S) as well as other prophets and the entire realm of being in comparison to the kingdom of the Absolute Sovereign and the irresistible Divine will that anything may be ascribed to :them? All of them are manifestations of the Divine Power and Will

(وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ.)

(And it is He who in heaven is God and in earth is God. (۴۳:۸۴

From another viewpoint, that is, from the aspect of multiplicity and the order of

causes and means, all the means are appropriate in their own

p: ۹۱۵

۱- ۸۲-۷۹:۱۸.

۲- ۷:۱۳

place and the perfect order of creation is regulated through a system and hierarchy of .means, causes and effects

And if the smallest of causes and means is withheld from doing its work the entire wheel of existence will come to a halt. And were it not for the relation of the temporal to the eternal, through the determined means and intermediaries, the path of Divine .effusion (fayd) would be intercepted and the stream of Divine mercy would be cut off

If someone were to attain to this refreshing fountainhead of faith through the study of the fundamentals and the preliminaries, established in their own place, especially in the ‘irfani books of the eminent [‘urafa’] and the books of the Chief of Philosophers and the Best of Islamic Philosophers (Sadr al-hukama’ wa al-falasifah wa afdal al-hukama’ al-Islamiyyah, i.e. Sadr al-Muta’allihin, known as Mullah Sadra), and should this teaching enter his heart, these doors would be opened for him and he would find that at the plane of gnostic discovery all these ascription are valid and there is not the .slightest trace of the metaphorical in them

Since some of the angels, charged with the souls of the faithful and the taking of their sacred souls, behold the stations that the faithful possess in the sacred presence of God, the Exalted, and, on the other hand, when they observe the aversion of the faithful [towards death], they get into a state of hesitation and indecision. It is this ,very state that God

the Exalted, hay attributed to Himself, in the same way that He has ascribed the .taking of souls, the guidance and the misleading to Himself

In the same way as those are correct on the basis of the mystic creed, this one is also valid. However, attaining to this fountain requires a fairness of talent and a sound and .subtle taste. And God is the All-knowing and He is the Guide

This point should not remain unmentioned that since the reality of existence is the very reality of perfection and completion, that which is defective and ugly is not attributable to God, the Exalted, and is not the object of creation (maj'ul), as is established in its own place. Hence the closer the effusion (fayd) to the horizon of perfection and the more devoid it is of weakness and deficiency, its relation to God is .more complete and its ascription to the Sacred Being truer

Conversely, the more predominant is the darkness of finitude and non-existence, and the more numerous the limits and inadequacies, the weaker is a thing's relation to God and the more remote its attribution. That is why the acts of origination and creation have been more often ascribed to God in the language of the Shari'ah and the transient mulki acts less often. Should an open eye and an awakened heart be able to distinguish inadequacy from perfection, the ugly from the fair, and the good from the evil, it would then understand that although the entire realm

of being is the manifestation of Divine efficiency and related to God, all the Divine acts are perfect and beautiful and none of the defects and evils are attributable to His .Sacred Being

That which is called 'attribution by accident' (intisab bi al-arad) in the jargon of the philosophers (hukama') (R) is a rumor at the plane of preliminary teaching and philosophy. This notion, in the present context, contains certain fallacies, and it is .better to refrain from discussing them here

Our main purpose in discussing this point was, firstly, to dispel certain false doubts that may arise in the mind of the ignorant person devoid of the knowledge of the .higher teaching

Secondly, the aim was to explain that the hesitation and conflicting motives [mentioned in the tradition], as they happen to some beings of the Malakut, are more .validly ascribed to God, than the events that occur in this [corporeal] world

Thirdly, the aim was that a person possessing the gnosis of the realities should again distinguish between the aspect of perfection and deficiency in this hesitation and vacillation of motives, and attribute the aspect of perfection to God and negate the .aspect of deficiency in relation to Him

Another Interpretation Of The Tradition Of Hesitation

There is another interpretation of the noble tradition relevant to this context, which had come to the mind of this incapable author. And that is that the servants of God are either the gnostics and the awliya' who are engaged in the journey towards God and on the path of the people of

the heart. This group of servants are absorbed in the Divine and in love with the unique Divine Beauty. The Sacred Essence of God is the kiblah of their attention and yearning, and apart from Him they do not behold any of the worlds, even themselves .and their own perfection

Or they are those who are immersed in the adornments of the world and sunk in the darkness of the love of glory and wealth, and the faces of their hearts are turned towards their own ego and egohood, without paying any attention to the world of the sacred and the celestial company of intimacy and love. These-they are the ones who have turned away from the Names of God (وهم الملحدون فی أسماء الله).

And the third group are the believers who attend to the world of the sacred in accordance with the light of their faith and they abhor death in proportion to their attention to this world. God has referred to these opposing attractions towards the Mulk and the Malakut, towards the Divine and the creation, towards the Hereafter and the world, as hesitation as attraction towards two opposite sides is present in hesitation. It is as if He were saying that this Mulki and Malakuti attraction is not .present in any existent the way it is present in the faithful servant

On the one hand he is averse to death due to his attention towards the realm of Mulk, and on the other hand the Divine gravity draws

him towards Itself in order to bring him to, his perfection. Hence God, the Exalted, is averse to do him offence which is equal to his remaining in the world of Mulk, and he himself is averse to death. However, other people are not such, because the awliya' do not have any Mulki attraction, and those immersed in the world do not possess any .Malakuti attraction

The meaning of attribution of these opposing attractions to God is the same as mentioned in the former interpretation. In this context the great researcher and the majestic Sayyid, Mir Damad,(۱) and his honored disciple have made certain .disclosures whose mention will further prolong this discourse

God's Reforming Of The State Of The Faithful Through Poverty And Wealth

From that which is stated in this noble tradition, that nothing will reform some of My servants except poverty and should I deprive them of it they would perish, and similarly there are some who will be reformed by wealth and sufficiency and will perish without it, it is known that whatever God, the Exalted, bestows upon the faithful, whether it is wealth or poverty, health or malady, safety or trepidation, and other such things, is for the reform of the state of the faithful and the purification of .the state of their hearts

And this noble tradition is not contrary to the many traditions that have been narrated pertaining to the intensity of the afflictions of the faithful through maladies and pains, poverty, destitution and other tribulations. For God, the Exalted, with His expansive mercy and all-encompassing grace, is

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Mir Damad, al-Qabasat, pp. ۴۶۹-۴۲۰; Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, pp. ۳۹۵. ff., "safar" ۳, - ۱ ."mawqif" ۴, "fasl" ۱۳

like a physician and a kind nurse Who makes everyone refrain from the world in some .particular way

At times, He gives wealth to someone and at the same time involves him in other afflictions in accordance with the strength and weakness, perfection and inadequacy of his faith. Rather, He surrounds wealth and riches with afflictions in such it manner as to turn him away from the world and the love for it. The temperament of this person is such that were he to be made poor, perhaps due to his seeing felicity in wealth and property and considering the worldly people its felicitous, he would turn to .the world and perish for ever in its pursuit

But when it is made accessible to him and, for the sake of restraining him from falling in love with it, it is surrounded by troubles and inner and outer distresses, he would turn away from the world. One of our great masters (D) used to say concerning having several wives that one imagines it to be for the sake of the world and attention towards it; but when one is afflicted with it one finds out that it is one of the great masterpieces (of legislation), which makes one leave the world and abandon it in the .very course of entry into it

Thus God, the Exalted, afflicts the faithful at times with poverty, reforming them and turning their hearts away from the world and giving them consolation. At times He afflicts them

with wealth and riches, and while one imagines them to be enjoying the world's bounties and having a good time, they are really afflicted with distress, tension, visitations and tribulations. At the same time, the tradition does not conflict with the fact that the poor among the faithful have a great merit before God, the Exalted, as is known from the traditions. We have explained some of the things pertaining to this topic under one of the earlier traditions.(1)

The Nearness Relating To Obligatory And Supererogatory Acts And Their Result, In Accordance With The Approach Of The Wayfarers

It should be known that for the wayfarer on the path of God and the emigrant from the dark house of the self to the real Ka'bah, there is a spiritual journey and a gnostic wayfaring whose origin is the habitat of the self and egoism and whose stages are the planes of finitude pertaining to 'the horizons and the souls' and the Mulk and the Malakut, which have been referred to as 'the veils of darkness and lights'.

إنَّ للهِ سَبْعِينَ ألْفَ حِجابٍ مِنْ نُورٍ وَظُلْمَهٍ.

Verily, for God there are a seventy thousand veils of light and darkness.(2)

These are the lights of being and the darkness of finitude, or the lights of Malakut and the darknesses of Mulk, or the darkening pollutions of carnal attachments and the pure lights of the attachment of the heart. These seventy thousand veils of light and darkness are at times summarily referred to as the seven veils, as narrated in relation to the opening takbirat from the Pure Imams, that they remove a veil with

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۱- See the exposition of the Fifteenth Hadith.

۲- Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-anwar, vol ۵۵, p. ۲۵, "kitab al-sama' wa al-alam," bab ۵, hadith ۱۳.

every takbirah,(1) and as is also narrated concerning the subject of prostration on the earth of the shrine of al-Husayn, may my soul be ransomed for him, that prostration on it removes the sevenfold veils.(2)

And a famous gnostic says:

هفت شهر عشق را عطار گشت

ما هنوز اندر خم یک کوچه ایم

Attar has roamed through the sevenfold cites of love, While we are still in the bend of a lane.(3)

These in the microcosmic Man have been referred to as the sevenfold subtleties (lata'if)(4) and sometimes their number is reduced to three inclusive veils, referred to as the 'threefold realms' of 'the horizons' (afaq) and 'the threefold planes' of the souls (anfus),(5) and at times to the thousand fold stages well known among the wayfarers. At times they have been divided, in one consideration, to a hundred and, in another consideration, to ten stages.

The perfect 'arif Shaykh Shahabadi (D) used to assign ten stations for every stage from among the stages of the wayfarers, and in this new and original division there would be in all a thousand stations. And Hadrat Ibrahim, the Friend of the Beneficent (A) has expressed his spiritual journey, as reported by God, the Exalted, [in the Qur'an] as consisting of threefold stages, one of which is called 'the Star,' another 'the Moon,' and the third 'the Sun.'(6)

In fine, the origin of the spiritual journey is the dark house of the self, and its stages are the planes and levels of the horizons and the souls. Its

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۱- Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol ۴, p. ۷۷۲, "kitab al-salat," "abwab takbirat al-ihram;" bab ۷, hadith ۵: هُشامُ بنُ الحَكَم عَنْ أبِی الحَسَنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ أَنَّهُ رُوِیَ لِذَلِكَ عِلَّةً أُخْرَی، وَهِيَ أنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَمَّا أُسْرِیَ بِهِ إلَی السَّمَاءِ قَطَعَ سَبْعَ حُجُبٍ فَكَبَّرَ عِنْدَ كُلِّ حِجابٍ تَكْبِيرَةً، فَأَوْصَلَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِذَلِكَ إلَی مُنْتَهَی

الكَرَامَهِ.

Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. ۳. p. ۶۰۸, "kitab al-salat," "abwab ma yusjad -۲ 'alayh;' bab ۱۶, hadith ۳: مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الحَسَنِ، فِی المِصْبَاحِ، بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُعَاوِيَه بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: كَانَ لأَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ خَرِيطَهُ دِيبَاجٍ صَفْرَاءُ فِيهَا تُرْبَهُ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ الحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ. فَكَانَ إِذَا حَضَرَتْهُ الصَّلاهُ صَبَّهُ عَلَى سَجَّادَتِهِ وَسَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إِنَّ السُّجُودَ عَلَى تُرْبَهِ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَخْرِقُ الحُجُبَ السَّبْعَ.

.Ascribed to Rumi: some attribute it to Ahd al-Rahman Jami -۳

Shahabadi (r) mention seven subtleties (latifah) of the human hang as follows: nafs -۴ (ego), 'aql (intellect), qalb (heart), ruh (spirit), sirr (secret, soul), khafi (hidden) and .akhfa (most hidden); see Rashahat al-bihar, "kitab al-insan wa al-fitrah," p. ۱۷۷

The threefold realms are the realm of physical nature (tabi'ah), the Imaginal realm -۵ (mithal), and the realm of the intellect ('aql), considered by Mulla Sadra as corresponding to the senses, imagination, and the intellect. See Shawahid al-.rububiyyuh, p. ۳۲۰

.۶:۷۷-۷۹ -۶

destination is the sacred Being of God with all the Names and the Attributes, at first, for the Perfect Man, and lastly as that wherein all the Names and the Attributes .dissolve, and every name, attribute, and definition belongs to something else

After that, the wayfaring human being overcomes his ego and egoism and leaves the house of the ego and passes through the stages and planes of finitude in his search of the real goal and his quest of the Divine, by transcending each of these and piercing through the veils of darkness and light, tearing his heart away from all beings and existences, and purging the Ka'bah of the heart of its idols with his Wali-like hand, and, when all the stars and the moons and the suns set and disappear from the horizon of his heart and the orientation of his heart, undisturbed by attachment to any other, becomes single, unified, and divine, and the state of his heart [like that of :[Abraham, as described in this verse

(إِنِّی وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِی لِلَّذِی فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ.)

(I have turned my face towards Him no created the heavens and the earth. (۶:۷۹

to become annihilated in the Names, the Essence and the Acts, then, in this state, he would become lost to himself, attaining total obliteration and absolute swoon. Then the Divine takes charge of his being, and he hears with the Divine hearing, sees through the Divine vision, holds with the hand of Divine power, and speaks with the Divine tongue. He

beholds through the Divine and sees nothing except God. He speaks through the Divine and says nothing but the Truth, becoming blind, deaf and dumb to the non-Divine, his eye and ear are open to nothing except the Truth.

This station is not attained except through the gravity of the Divine and the spark of the fire of love, the flame of eternal love, which brings him close to the threshold of proximity to the Divine. Through that pulse of Divine attraction, which follows from [the Divine] self-love, he is helped so as not to stumble in this valley of bewilderment and so as not to fall victim to shath and the like, which are remnants of egoism. And in this tradition there is a reference to these two, in His words:

وَإِنَّهُ لَيَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّافِلَهِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ.

And he gradually draws nearer to Me through the nawafil, until I love him.

The drawing near of the servant is through the spark of yearning ('ishq), and the pulse of Divine gravity from love (hubb):

تاکه از جانب معشوق نباشد کششی

کوشش عاشق بیچاره جایی نرسد

Until there is not an attraction from the Beloved's quarter, The efforts of the poor lover do not get anywhere.(۱)

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Hence the ultimate of nearness through the nawafil is total fana', absolute dissolution and complete obliteration, and its result is 'I become the hearing wherewith he hears...' And after this complete fana', total obliteration, absolute annihilation, and complete swoon (sa'q), at times the eternal grace comes to his aid, bringing him to

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۱- Dehkhuda, Amthal wa hikam, vol. ۱, p- ۵۳۷.

himself and returning him to the domain of his own self, whereat he finds himself in the state of awakening (sahw) and the state of intimacy (uns) and serenity (tumaninah) comes upon him, whereat the glories of Beauty and Majesty dawn upon .him

In this state of consciousness, to him are revealed the Attributes in the mirror of the Essence (dhat), and in them the fixed archetypes (a'yan thabitah) and their requisites. The state of the people of the path of gnosis at this station is also like their first station, in that its fixed archetype is subject to a certain Name. Its annihilation is in the same Name as well as its survival. In the state of sahw also the same Name is disclosed to him and the disclosure of the fixed archetype subject to the same Name .is obtained by him

The Secret Of The Variance Among The Prophets In Respect Of Prophethood

Hence for the Perfect Man (insan al-kamil), who is subject to the Greatest All-inclusive Name, the absolute disclosure of the fixed archetypes and their accompanying requisites is obtained from eternity to eternity. Revealed also to him are the states and potentialities of all the existents and the character of their wayfaring as well as .(the pattern of their fulfillment (wusul

The robes of the seal of prophethood and ultimate prophecy, which is the consequence of absolute disclosure, fit his fair and upright stature. Each of the other prophets, in accordance with the Name they manifest and in proportion to the capacity and vastness of its domain, obtain the

disclosure of the archetype subject to that Name. The degree of the perfection and deficiency of their ministry, its degree of nobility, and its vastness and narrowness, derive therefrom and are subject to their respective Divine Names, as discussed in (detail by us in the treatise Misbah al-hidayah.(١)

In fine, after that the state of recovery occurs following the obliteration, his being becomes divine and God, the Exalted, observes other existents in the mirror of his beauty, or, rather, it occupies the same plane as that of the Divine Will (mashiyyah). For the Perfect Man, is on the same plane as the Absolute Will (mashiyyah) and his .spirituality becomes the same as the manifestation of Divine efficiency

In such a state God, the Exalted, sees through him, hears through him, and holds by his means, and he himself is the irresistible Divine Will, the perfect intent, and knowledge-in-act ('ilm fili). Hence God hears by him, sees by him,.. . and so on and so forth to the end of the hadith. [The same matter is referred to in the following :tradition] and others like it

عَلِيٌّ عَيْنُ اللهِ وَسَمْعُ اللهِ وَجَنْبُ اللهِ.

(Ali is the eye of God, the hearing of God, and the Divine proximity.(٢'

Hence the nearness of the obligations of sahw is consequent to the obliteration, and its result is that which you have heard. The Sahw consequent to obliteration is a state other than this state of negligence of ours. That plurality, consequent to absolute fana', is different from the

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١- Misbah al-hidayah, pp. ١٩٢-١٩٥.

٢- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-Tawhid, p.١۶۴, bab ٢٢,hadith ١.

plurality in which we are immersed. That is because plurality is a veil for us that hides the Divine Face, while for them it is a mirror of epiphany, [as stated by ‘Ali [:

مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إلاّ وَرَأَيْتُ اللّه مَعَهُ وَفِيهِ وَقَبْلَهُ وَبَعْدَهُ.

(I did not see a thing without beholding God with it, in it, before it, and after it.(١)

The nearness of the nawafil may be considered as obliteration in the Names (fana’ asma’i) and the nearness of fara’id, as obliteration in the Essence. Accordingly, the result of the nearness of fara’id becomes absolute obliteration, and its further elaboration is not appropriate to this place. Even this much was beyond the scope of these pages.

A Citation From The Most August Shaykh Baha’i

The august shaykh and gnostic, Baha’i (R) in commenting on this noble tradition in his Arba’in, states: “In this regard there are certain sublime statements made by the people of the heart, containing subtle points and spiritual hints which fill the olfactory sense of the spirit with their aroma and quicken the decaying bones of the specters.

None is guided to the their meaning and knows their reality except someone who has given lip his comforts through austerities until he comes to get a taste of them and reaches their meaning. But one who is ignorant of their secrets and deprived of the treasure of their teachings, due to his immersion in base carnal joys and being drowned in physical pleasures, is exposed to a great danger on hearing these words, and it is feared that he

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١- ٣ -Al-Asfar, vol. ١, pp. ١١٧ ;’Ilm al-yaqin, vol. I, p. ٤٩; Kalimat maknunah. p.

would fall into blasphemy and come to believe in incarnation (hulul and ittihad). And Exalted is God greatly above that:

تَعالَى اللهُ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا.

Here at this point we will state the matter simply and accessibly so that it is near to understanding. Hence, we may say, these words represent the extreme in nearness, describing the domination of love's Sovereign on the outward and inward being of the servant. Therefore, what is meant-and God knows best-is this:

When I love a servant, I draw him to the point of intimacy and turn him towards the world of sanctity, immersing his mind in the mysteries of Malakut and confining his senses to perceiving the lights of Jabarut. In this state his feet remain steady at the station of proximity, and love so mingles with his flesh and blood that he becomes unconscious of himself. Thereat, everything else disappears from his sight until I become like his sight and hearing, as has been said:

جُـــنونی فِیکَ لا یخْفی ونَارِی مِنکَ لا یخْبُو

فَأنتَ السَّمعُ والأبْصارُ والأرکانُ والقَلبُ

That I'm mad of Thee, is no secret, My fire, lit by Thee, won't go out,

Thus Thou art my hearing and my sight, My body, and my heart?(١)

Here end his words, may God elevate his station.

A Citation From Khwajah Tusi

His Excellency, the best of the later scholars and the most perfect among the predecessors, Khwajah Nasir

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١- Arba'in, hadith ٣٥, p. ٢٩٩.

Tusi (Q) says, "When the gnostic is cut off from himself and joined to God, he sees all powers as vanishing in Divine power and all sciences as drowned in Divine knowledge and all wills as vanishing in His will. Then he sees all the existents and their perfections as having originated and emanated from Him. At this time God, the Exalted, becomes his hearing and sight, power, knowledge and existence. Thereupon the character of the gnostic becomes divine."(١) Here end his words, may God increase the sublimity of .his station

The honored Majlisi has also made certain remarks on the issue. Their summary is that if man uses his faculties and energies in the way of Satan and carnal appetites, nothing remains of them except regret and shame. But if he spends them in the way of obedience to God, He transforms them into spiritual faculties. Then his hearing and .sight become spiritual hearing and spiritual vision

With that hearing he hears the speech of the angels, and this sight and vision are not weakened even by death. It is with this spiritual hearing and sight that he encounters the interrogation of the grave. On the contrary, those who do not possess this sight and hearing are raised blind and deaf from the dead. It is concerning this gift that God, the Exalted, has said, "I become the hearing wherewith he hears..."(٢) These .words, coming as they do from him, are not without a surprise

Concluding Note

The august shaykh, Baha'i, says,(٣) "This

١- Sharh al-Isharat, vol. ٣, p. ٣٨٩, namat ٩, fasl ١٩.

٢- Al-Majlisi, Mir'at al-'uqul, vol. ١٠, p. ٣١٢, "kitab al-iman wa al Kufr," "bab man adha al Muslimin," hadith ٨.

٣- Arba'in, hadith ٣٥, p. ٣٠٢.

noble tradition explicitly indicates that the obligatory duties (wajibat) have a greater merit than the supererogatory ones (mustahabbat) and that there is a greater reward for their performance. And the Shaykh al-Shahid (M) and some other scholars have regarded certain cases as exceptions to it wherein the supererogatory (sunnah) is superior to that which is obligatory.

One of them is foregoing one's debt altogether, which is superior to giving time to the debtor in a condition of hardship, although the first is supererogatory while the second is obligatory. Another is being the first to greet someone, which is superior to answering another's greeting (salam). A third case is repeating a prayer offered individually with jama'ah [which according to traditions is superior to a prayer offered individually by twenty-seven degrees, whereas the repeating is supererogatory]," and such other cases. Some have disputed each of these exceptions, whose mention is not so necessary.

It should be known that the literal import of the noble tradition is that the obligations are superior to supererogatory acts though they may not be of the same kind. For instance, the returning of salam, which is obligatory, is superior to a supererogatory hajj and the founding of a great school or the ziyarah of the Messenger of God, although this may appear to be somewhat improbable. Accordingly, marhum Majlisi (M) has said(١) that possibly that is restricted to acts of the same category.

However, in the presence of a proof one cannot say such a thing on mere

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١- Mir'at al-'uqul, vol. ١٠, p. ٣٨١, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab man adha al-Muslimin," hadith ٧.

improbability. And possibly the superiority of the obligations is to be considered as being applicable to prescribed rituals, such as prayer, fasting, hajj, zakat, and the like, not to other obligations, like giving time to a debtor in straits, returning salam, and so on, although this possibility is also not free of doubt. And all Praise belongs to Allah, at .beginning and end

Thirty-Fifth Hadith: God And Man, Good And Evil

point

بِالسَّنَد المُتَّصِلِ إِلى عِمَادِ الإِسْلام وَالمُسْلِمِينَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ أبِي نَصْرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو الحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: قَالَ اللهُ: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، بِمَشِيئَتِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الَّذِى تَشَاءُ لِنَفْسِكَ مَا تَشَاءُ، وَبِقُوَّتِى أَدَّيْتَ فَرَائِضِى، وَبِنِعْمَتِى قَوِيتَ عَلَى مَعْصِيَتِى. جَعَلْتُكَ سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً قَوِيّاً. مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللهِ، وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ. وَذَاكَ أَنِّى أَوْلَى بِحَسَنَاتِكَ مِنْكَ، وَأَنْتَ أَوْلَى بِسَيِّئَاتِكَ مِنِّى. وَذَاكَ أَنَّنِى لا أُسْأَلُ عَمَّا أَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ.

With my continuous chain of authorities reaching up to the Pillar of Islam and Muslims, Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni (R), from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Nasr, who said, Abu al-Hasan al Rida (A) said, God has said: “O son of Adam, it is with My will that you are such a being that you will for yourself whatever you will, and it is with My power that you carry out the duties I have prescribed for you, and it is with My bounty that you found the ,strength to disobey Me. I made you hearing

seeing, and strong. Whatever good visits you is from God, and whatever evil strikes you is from your own self. That, because I have a greater right to your virtues than yourself, and you are worthier of your vices than Me. And hence I am not asked concerning what I do and they are asked.(1)"(2)

Exposition

There are in this noble tradition certain sublime and important themes pertaining to the higher metaphysical science, which if mentioned with their elaborate preliminaries would take us beyond the scope of these pages and prolong this discourse inordinately. Hence, inevitably, taking a middle course, we will deal with them with brevity, mentioning, in the course of a few sections, some of these issues as established conclusions. And our trust is in God.

Two Stations Of Divine Names

It should be known that there are two stations for the Will (mashiyyah) of God, the Exalted-majestic is His glory-or, rather, for all the other Names and Attributes, such as Knowledge, Life, Power, and the rest of them.

One of them is the station of the Names and Attributes of the Essence. (asma' wa sifat al-dhatiyyah). It is established by metaphysical proofs that the Sacred Essence (dhat) of the Necessary Being combines in Itself all the perfections and all the Names and Attributes, and that in a single mode and from an aspect that is absolutely simple. All the perfections and the Names and Attributes of Beauty and Glory derive from its simple existential mode, and that which is beyond being is deficiency, defect, and

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۱- ۲۱:۲۳.

۲- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i, p. ۱۵۲, "kitab al-tawhid," "bab al-mashiyyah wa al- iradah," hadith ۶.

non-existence. And as His Sacred Essence is pure being and absolute existence, It is pure and absolute perfection (kamal al-sirf wa sirf al-kamal). [He is] the totality of knowledge, the totality of Power and the totality of Life عِلْمٌ كُلُّهُ قُدْرَةٌ كُلُّهُ حَيَاةٌ كُلُّهُ.

The other station is that of the [Names and] Attributes of the Divine Acts (asma' wa sifat al-fi'liyyah), the plane of manifestation of the Names and Attributes of the Essence, which is the plane of manifestation of the Attributes of Glory and Beauty. And this is the station of ma'iyyat al-qayyumiyyah (contiguity of the Sustainer and the sustained existents), [referred to in the Qur'anic verse]:

(وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ.)

(He is with you, wherever you may be. (۵۷:۴)

(مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.)

Three conspire not secretly together, but He is the fourth of them, neither five men, but He is the sixth of them, neither fewer then that, neither more, but He is with them, wherever they may be. (۵۸:۷)

And it is the plane of the Face of Allah (wajh Allah):

(فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ.)

(Whithersoever you may turn to there is the Face of God. (۲:۱۱۵)

And it is the plane of the Divine effulgence (nuriyyat):

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (۲۴:۳۵)

And it is the plane of the Absolute Will (mashiyyat al-mutalaqah):

(وَمَا

تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ.)

(And you will not without God's willing. (۸۱:۲۹

خَلَقَ اللهُ المَشِيَّهَ بِنَفْسِهَا ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الأَشْيَاءَ بِالمَشِيَّهِ.

(God created all things with His will, and He created the will by itself.(۱

And there are still other terms and descriptions for it in the language of the People of God, and both of those planes are referred to in this noble verse of the Divine :Scripture

(هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ.)

(He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. (۵۷:۳

The plane of the absolute, active Will has an encompassment of sustainment (ihateh-ye qayyumiyyah) over all the existents of the realms of mulk and malakut, and all the existents are, from one aspect, its particular modifications (ta'ayyunat), and front .(another aspect its manifestations (mazahir

It is in respect of this station of active Will (mashiyyat al-fi'liyyah) and the manifesting character (mazhariyyat) of the wills of the creatures and their dissolution (fana') in it-or, rather, the fact that the creatures themselves, with all their aspects, manifest and reflect it-that the noble tradition says: O Son of Man, it is with My Will that you are one who wills. Your being (dhat) and its perfections are by My will itself, and, rather, you :yourself and your perfections are particular expressions (ta'ayyunat) of my will

(وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى.)

(And when thou threwest, it was not thou that threw, but God threw. (۸:۱۷

And there are so numerous statements in traditions and Qur'anic verses in support of this matter that their mention is not

.Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i, p. ١١٠, “bab iradah annaha min sifat al-fil,” hadith ۴ -١

.essential

The august Shaykh al-Ishraq Suhrawardi (Q) considers God's detailed knowledge ('ilm tafsili) of things as being the same as this plane of active knowledge, and the Muhaqqiq (Khwajah Nasir al-Din) Tusi (Q) has followed him in this opinion. Hadrat Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Q) considers (God's) detailed knowledge to be the same as the plane of the simple Divine Essence. To him the statements of those two figures are not absolutely satisfactory, but this author considers the opinions of each of them to imply essentially the same position, the disagreement between them being merely verbal, .though an elucidation of this matter is not appropriate here

From this explanation, it is known that every thing that comes into existence, whether they are the sacred substances of the divine realm, or the natural substances of the realm of mulk, or accidents, whether it is the essences, or attributes, or acts-all of them come into being with the sustainment, sway, and all-inclusiveness of the Divine :Power. Hence, the meaning of the statement becomes clear

وَبِقَوَّتِی أَدَّیْتَ فَرَائِضِی.

.It is with My Power that you carry out the obligations prescribed by Me

Also, the station of the absolute Will is the same as that of the all-encompassing :Mercy (rahmah) and the all-inclusive Bounteousness. Hence He has said

وَبِنِعْمَتِی قَوِیتَ عَلَی مَعْصِیَتِی.

.And it is with My bounty that you obtained the strength to disobey Me

An Allusion To The Topic Of Jabr And Tafwid

There is a clear allusion in this noble tradition to the problem of jabr and tafwid, and it spells out the right creed in this regard, that of

amr bayn al-amrayn or manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn, which is in accordance with the way of the gnostics and the path of the People the heart. That is because it affirms both the Divine Will (mashiyyah) as well as the power and role of the creatures, which are moreover considered to derive from the Divine Will. (It means to say): You .exercise your will, and it is by My Will that your will has been manifested

You carry out the duties, and your power is a manifestation of My power. And it is with My bounty, which is the expansive table of My all-inclusive mercy, that your power to disobey was acquired. Hence all the acts and attributes and existents [that relate to you] are not capable of absolute negation in relation to you, in the same way as these cannot be affirmed of you absolutely. You exercise your will, and your willing is subsumed in My Will and is its manifestation and a conditioned expression (ta'ayyun) of it. It is with your own power that you have the capacity to obey or disobey Me, and, ".at the same time, your power and strength are manifestations of My power

Thereafter, a likely objection -that, on this basis, the defects, vices, and sins [of creatures] are to be attributed to God- is dispelled by a metaphysical and discursive, as well as a mystical and gnostic, rejoinder that since God, the Exalted, is pure perfection, goodness, beauty, and glory, everything that derives from His

sacred quarter is perfection and goodness. Rather, the order of existence and the reality of being, the visible and the invisible, is concurrent with perfection, completion, and beauty. And that which is deficient, vicious, evil, and bad derives from non-existence and finitude and is associated with essence (mahiyyah), which is not the .object of creation (ja'l) and Divine emanation

Rather, the evils present in the realm of nature and the narrow realm of mulk pertain to the contradictions between the existents. And the narrowness of the world and the contradictions between them are not the object of creation. Hence, all good, perfection, and virtue derives from God, and all deficiency, evil, and sin derives from :(the creatures, as stated (in the Qur'anic verse

(مَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ حَسَنَهٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَيِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man), it is from Allah, and whatever or ill befalleth (thee it is from thyself. (۴: ۷۹

Hence, all the felicities of the world and the Hereafter, and all the good pertaining to the realms of mulk and malakut emanate from the Mainspring of goodness, and all the evil and wretchedness of this world and the Hereafter derive from the essential deficiency and lack of the existents themselves. And that which is commonly said, that felicity and wretchedness do not derive from the Creator's creation but from the .(essences (dhat) of things, is without basis in relation to felicity (sa'adat

Because felicity is the object of Divine Creation; and emanation, and felicity does

not derive from any essence or quiddity. Rather, sheer extinction and complete wretchedness derive from essence. However, it is correct [to say that] in relation to wretchedness (shaqawah), for it derives from essence (mahiyyah) and is not the object of creation (ghayr maj'ul), being lower than the plane of creation. And as to the :famous tradition

السَّعِيدُ سَعِيدٌ فِى بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ وَالشَّقِيُّ شَقِيٌّ فِى بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ.

The felicitous one is felicitous in his mother's womb, and the wretched one is ,wretched in his mother's womb

it has a different meaning relating to the science of the Names and the Attributes, and .its mention is not relevant here

And as following the explanation of this truth based on metaphysical proof, there remained the likelihood of a doubt that the negation of any role for the existents in relation to all that is good, and the negation of the evils in relation the eternal and necessary power of God, implies jabr and tafwid-which are contrary to established truth, in accordance with the way of gnosis and the path of metaphysical reasoning-it was met with the statement, clothed in the language of the previous metaphysical argument and one which substantiates it, that God, the Exalted, is worthier than the creatures in regard to the attribution of virtues and that they are worthier than the Sacred Divine Essence in relation to the attribution of vices. In this affirmation, there .is affirmation of worthiness of ascription in relation to each of the two sides

As to God's being worthier than

the creatures in relation to all that is good, and the principle of its attribution to the creatures, that is because the relation of good to the Source of all sources is the relation of existence (wujud) and intrinsic (bi al-dhat), because good is intrinsic to existence, being identical with the Essence in the Necessary Being and, in the .(contingent, through creation (ja'l) and emanation (ifadah

Hence the emanating principle of good derives from the Necessary Existent, the Exalted, and the contingent is the mirror for Its manifestation and Its manifester (muzhir), and that relation of (active) manifestation (zahiriyyat) and emanation is more complete than this relation of receptivity and (passive) manifestation .((mazhariyyat

However, this case is the reverse in respect of evils and vices; but each of the two relations stands affirmed. That is because that which is emanated by God is good, and this good is accompanied with associating evils in a sub-ordinate manner. Hence they are attributable to Him accidentally (bi al-'arad,) and attributable and essential to the deficiency and inadequacy of essences (mahiyyat). Accordingly, these two points of view are also mentioned in the noble verses. There, where the sovereignty of Unity :prevails and overshadows plurality and deficiency, He says

(قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.)

(Say (O Muhammad): Everything is from God. (۴:۷۸

and there where the intervention of accidental plurality is taken into account and the ,mediating means are considered, He declares

(مَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ حَسَنَهٍ فَمِنْ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَیِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

Whatever of good befalleth thee (O

(man), it is from Allah, and whatever or ill befalleth thee it is from thyself. (۴: ۷۹

God, the Exalted, is not Answerable Concerning what He does and other Existents are Answerable

It should be known that the authorities amongst the philosophers say that there is no end or purpose for the Divine act except the Sacred Essence and Its essential manifestations, and that it not possible for the Sacred Essence to have any end for the creation of things beyond itself and Its manifestation. That is because every agent that creates something for an end beyond its essence, whatever that may be, even if it is for procuring a benefit for itself, or bestowing a reward on another than itself, or for worship, or knowledge (ma'rifah), praise and glorification, needs it for its own perfection, and its existence is preferable to it over its non-existence, and this implies .deficiency, inadequacy, and deriving benefit from something else

This is impossible for the absolutely perfect Divine Essence which is self-sufficient and necessary in all respects. Hence, there is no teleological ground, nor a question of wherefore, in His acts, and He is not asked concerning what He does. However, other existents have ends and purposes in their acts that lie beyond their essence. Thus the end of the acts of the lovers of Divine Beauty and those blessed with nearness (muqarrabin), and extinction in the Divine (majdhubin) is reaching the door of Allah, encounter with the Divine (liqa Allah), and reaching the threshold of Divine sanctity. ,And so do other beings have ends additional to their essences

.in accordance with their perfection and deficiency, intensity and weakness

Also, That which is Absolute Perfection and necessary-in-itself, is necessary in all respects, and in the same way that His sacred essence is devoid of teleological grounds, His acts too are devoid of any teleological grounds beyond the Essence, .contrary to all other existents

Similarly, since His sacred Essence is Ultimate Beauty and Perfection, it is the Ka'bah of aspiration of all existents and the ultimate end of the entire chain of being, but the Ka'bah of aspiration and the ultimate end does not have an end beyond itself, as other existents are essentially deficient and every deficient thing is, by nature, the object of repulsion, in the same way that every perfect thing is the object of attraction and pursuit. Hence, the end of all movements and acts is the Sacred Essence, and for .the Sacred Essence itself there is no end beyond Itself

(لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ.)

(He is not asked concerning what He does, and they are asked. (۲۲:۲۳

Also, since the Sacred Essence is ultimate Beauty and Perfection, the order of existence, which is the shadow of the Beautiful Essence, is utmost perfection and the universal order is the most perfect of all conceivable orders. Hence, the question concerning teleology, end, purpose, and benefit arises due to ignorance and deficiency. Accordingly, the accursed Iblis put the well-known sevenfold questions and God, the Exalted, answered all of them, concisely and in the manner of fair disputation, with a single

answer. Hence, God is not to be questioned concerning His acts due to His ultimate perfection and other existents are liable to question due to their deficiency, in essence .as well as actions

Also, since God, the Exalted, is absolute wisdom, each of the acts that derive from Him possesses ultimate soundness, and so is unquestionable, contrary those of other .existents

Similarly, since every act of God, the Exalted, derives from the Reality of His Essence and. the very truth and absoluteness of His Being, and other existents are not such, therefore, He is agent-by-essence, and a question concerning His ends is invalid, contrary to the case of other existents. And since His Will and Power are the same as His Sacred Essence, efficiency-by essence in that Sacred Essence is the same as efficiency by will and power, and there is no room for any objection relating to efficiency-by-nature (fa'iliyyat bi al-tab'). This is one of the noble topics that is established in its own place, and through it are resolved many of the doubts posed by the theologians (mutakallimun) concerning various topics relating to the divine .sciences

From this explanation, we come to know the causal interrelation between the sentences of this noble tradition. Thus since Divine Acts are consummate perfection and perfect order, He is not questioned concerning what He does, and others are questioned, because they are not such. This is the cause for His being worthier of virtues and the creatures' being worthier in relation to the attributability of

vices. And this is the cause for the attribution of every vice to the creature and every virtue to God. This relationship can also be established by other explanations, which .were not mentioned here. And to Allah belongs all Praise, at every beginning and end

Thirty-Sixth Hadith: The Attributes Of God

point

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى ثِقَهِ الاِسْلامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِى عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ الطَّيَالِسِيُّ عَنْ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْكَانَ عَنْ أَبِى بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: لَمْ يَزَلِ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَبَّنَا وَالعِلْمُ ذَاتُهُ وَلا مَعْلُومَ، وَالسَّمْعُ ذَاتُهُ وَلا مَسْمُوعَ، وَالبَصِيرُ ذَاتُهُ وَلا مُبْصِرَ، وَالقُدْرَهُ ذَاتُهُ وَلا مَقْدُورَ. فَلَمَّا أَحْدَثَ الأَشْيَاءَ وَكَانَ المَعْلُومُ، وَقَعَ العِلْمُ مِنْهُ عَلَى المَعْلُومِ وَالسَّمْعُ عَلَى المَسْمُوعِ وَالبَصِيرُ عَلَى المُبْصِرِ وَالقُدْرَهُ عَلَى المَقْدُورِ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: فَلَمْ يَزَلِ اللهُ مُتَحَرِّكاً؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ: تَعَالَى اللهُ عَنْ ذِلِكَ، إِنَّ الحَرَكَهَ صِفَهٌ مُحْدِثَهٌ بِالفِعْلِ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: فَلَمْ يَزَلِ اللهُ مُتَكَلِّماً؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الكَلامَ صِفَهٌ مُحْدِثَهٌ لَيْسَتْ بِأَزَلِيَّهٍ، كَانَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلا مُتَكَلِّمٌ.

With my continuous chain of authorities reaching up to the Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni, from ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, from Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Tayalisi, from Safwan ibn Yahya, from Ibn Muskan, from Abu Basir who said: I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah (A) say, “God, the Almighty and the Glorious, was our Lord even at a time when Knowledge was His Essence and there was no knowable, Hearing was His Essence and there was no audible thing, seeing was His Essence and there was no visible thing, and Power was His essence

and there was nothing subject to power. Thus when He created things and the knowable came into being, His Knowledge pertained to the known thing, His Hearing to that which is audible, and His Sight to that which is visible, and His Power to that which is subject to power." Abu Basir says: I asked him, "Hadn't God been ever-moving?" He replied, "Exalted is God above that! Indeed movement is a quality that comes into existence (muhdath) by action." Abu Basir says: I asked him, "Hadn't God been ever-speaking [in pre-eternity?" He replied, "Speech is a quality that comes into existence (sifatun mahdathah) and is not eternal (azal). God, Almighty and Glorious, (existed, and He was not speaker."(١)

Exposition

and , زال is apparently the predicate (khabar) of ربّنا ,لَمْ يَزَلِ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَبَّنَا In the statement is the adverb of condition (hall) for it. However [such an والعلم ذاته the phrase assumption] does not give smooth (salis) meaning, nor does it achieve the purpose. Because the purpose is not to affirm the eternity of [God's] Lordship, but to affirm the pre-eternity of His Knowledge and its precedence over the knowable. It may be said is in the nominative case (marfu') and is appositive to the noun (ism) of ربّنا the phrase with the predicate (khabar) being omitted (mahdhuf), as indicated by the phrase زال والعلم ذاته. Assuming the ellipsis, the sentence would be like this: لَمْ يَزَلِ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَبَّنَا وَالعِلْمُ ذَاتُهُ. is زال And it is possible that

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١- Usul al-Kafi, i,١٠٧, "kitab al-tawhid" "bab sifat al-dhat" hadith ١.

a perfect verb (tammah), sufficing with the nominative case, on the basis of which it is always defective (naqis), يزال for the past tense of زال يزال not زال يزول would be .which is always perfect يزول contrary to

is here complete, meaning that 'when He created the وكان المعلوم, كان And in the phrase .things and the knowable came into existence

and بالقوه is opposed to بالفعل it is probable that the expression محدثه بالفعل In the phrase maybe in the sense of verbal noun, meaning that an Attribute that is realized with creation cannot be God's Attribute. There are some noble topics that have been referred to in this hadith, and we shall discuss some of them to an extent appropriate .to this discourse

The Identity of God's Attributes with His Essence

It should be known that there is a reference in this noble tradition to God's Sacred Essence being identical to His true Attributes of perfection, like Knowledge, Power, Hearing and Sight. This is one of the important topics (of philosophy and kalam) whose elaborate treatment is, however, outside the scope of this treatise. Here we will refer to the true position in this regard in accordance with firm metaphysical proofs' of the .(philosophers (hukama') and the way of the people of gnosis (ahl al-ma'ri fat

It should -be known that it has been clearly established in its appropriate place that that which belongs to the categories of perfection and beauty derives from the mainspring of existence and the root of the reality of being, and that in the

realm of existence there is no more than one noble principle, which is the mainspring of all perfections and the source of all goodness, and that is the Reality of Being (haqiqat al-wujud). And were the totality of perfections not the same as the Reality of Being, and were there some kind of duality in the context of concrete reality; of whatever form, or separation from It, that, would ‘imply that there are two principles in the domain of Being, which in turn implies many inadmissible conclusions. Hence whatever that is perfection, is not such on the basis of meaning and essence, but by virtue of its actualization and realization in the context of concrete reality, and that which is real in the context of concrete reality is one principle, which is existence. .Hence, all perfection derives from one principle, which is the reality of existence

It has also been clearly established that the reality of existence is sheer simplicity in all aspects, and composition is absolutely precluded from its sacred precincts, as long as it retains its essential and original sheerness and purity of its own reality. However, when it descends from its original reality, it assumes composition in an accidental manner, at the plane of the intellect a s well as external reality, in accordance with its planes and stations (mashahid wa manazil). But in respect of its essence (dhat), it .remains single, and composition is something alien to it and accidental

:Two sublime principles are inferred from these explanations

,First

that which is simple in all aspects is the totality of perfections in one and a single aspect. And in the same aspect that It is existent, It is also Knowing, Powerful, Living, and Willing and all the other names and Attributes of beauty and glory are true of It. He is Knower in the [same] aspect that He is Powerful, and Powerful in the [same] aspect that He is Knower, without there being any difference of consideration (i'tibar) even on the plane of the intellect. And as to the difference of the concepts of the Names and the words that are used to represent them, which are unconditioned (la bi shart) intellectual concepts, it does not correspond to a difference in concrete reality, and it has been clearly established that numerous concepts of perfection are .abstracted from one thing

Rather, that which is implied by the foregoing explanation is that all the concepts of perfection are abstracted from a single aspect (haythiyyat al-wahidah). And if the concepts of perfection were to be abstracted from different aspects, as in the case of some contingents, this is accidental, and that is due to the descent (tanazzul) of the .reality of existence and its accidental mingling with non-existences

The second principle is that that which is perfect in all aspects and is absolute perfection and goodness must be simple in all aspects. And from these two, another principle is inferred, that that which is composite, in whatever manner, is not perfect in

all aspects and is subject to deficiency and nonexistence as well, and that which is deficient is not absolutely simple.

Therefore, as God, the Exalted, is completely simple, and composition, which implies contingency,-poverty, and dependence on another, does not affect Him absolutely, He is perfect in all aspects and possesses all the Names and Attributes, and He is the very ground of reality and the essence of being, without His existence bearing any taint of non-existence, and without His perfections bearing any taint of imperfection. Hence-He is sheer being, for were non-existence to find way into Him; the evil of composite things, which consists of the composition of existence and non-existence, would find way into Him. Thus He is the sheerness of Knowledge, the sheerness of Life, the sheerness of Power, the sheerness 'of Sight,' of Hearing and all other perfections. This explains the statement of Imam Sadiq (A) that

وَالعِلْمُ ذَاتُهُ وَالقُدْرَهُ وَالسَّمْعُ وَالبَصَرُ ذَاتُهُ.

And Knowledge is His Essence, and so are Power, Hearing, and Sight His Essence.

The Statements Of The Philosophers On The Division Of Divine Attributes

It should be known that the divine philosophers have divided the Attributes of God, the Exalted, into three kinds:

First, the true Attributes (sifat haqiqiyyah), and these have been divided into two kinds: the absolute true Attributes (sifat haqiqiyyah mahdah), such as Life, Subsistence, eternity and the like, and the relational true Attributes (sifat haqiqiyyah dhat al-idafah), like Knowledge, Power, and Will, which involve a relation to the objects of Knowledge, Power and Will (ma'lum, maqdur, and murad). These two kinds of Attributes are considered

,(by them to be the same as the Essence (dhat

Second, the absolutely relative Attributes (sifat idafiyyah mahdah), such as [the Attributes of] being the Originator, Provider, Merciful, Omniscient, Omnipotent, and .the like

Third, the absolutely negative Attributes (sifat salbiyyah mahdah), such as Unlikeness [to creatures] (quddusiyyah), Oneness (fardiyyah), Transcendence (subbuhiyyah), and .the like

These two [latter] kinds of Attributes are considered by them to be additional to the Sacred Essence, and all the negations are considered to derive from a single negation, which is the negation of contingency (salb al-imkan). Similarly, all the relations are referred to a single relation, which is the relation of Creatorhood (muwajjidiyyah), and the source of relations is referred to the illuminative and (emanative relation (idafah-ye ishraqiyyah wa idafah-ye i fadiyyah).(١

This author does not consider as valid these divisions, along with the identification of the 'true Attributes' [with the Essence] and the consideration of the relative and negative Attributes as additional, as mentioned by them with their proofs, and he considers them neither in conformity with the firm metaphysical proofs nor with the correct conceptions of gnosis. That is because none of the Attributes are to be considered as being identical with the Essence-when dealing with the concepts of the Names and the Attributes from the viewpoint of conceptual multiplicity. And should we regard the Essence as being identical with the relative or the negative Attributes, that would imply that God; the Exalted, is pure relation and identical with the negative .aspect

Similarly, if He

Al-Asfar al-arba'ah, vi,١١٨, safar ٣, mawqif ٢ on the discussion of the Sifat. See also -١ .Sabzawaris gloss at this place

is regarded as being identical with the true Attributes, that implies that God, the Exalted, is the same as derivative conceptions (mafahim i'tibariyyah) and rational ideas (ma'ani' 'aqliyyah), and He is exalted above' that. And should we consider the realities of the Attributes and the concrete instances of the Names and the Attributes, then all the Names and the relative as well as the true Attributes are found to be the same as the Sacred Essence, and the difference between 'knowledgeability' ('alimiyyah) and knower ('alim), and 'powerfulness' (qadiriyyah) and powerful (qadir) is only that of conceptual consideration, and all the relational Attributes derive from His Essential Mercifulness (rahimiyyah) and Beneficence (rahmaniyyah), even the Attributes of being the Provider (raziqiyyah) and Creator (khaliqiyyah), and the rest.

Also, with respect to their reducing all the negations to the negation of contingency and all the relations to a single relation, and their abstaining from reducing the true Attributes to anything, it may be remarked that should we consider the matter from a conceptual viewpoint, none of them derives from another, neither the negations, nor the relations, nor the true Attributes. But if the realities are taken into view, all the true Attributes also refer to the One Necessary Reality.

The Identity Of The Attributes With The Sacred Essence

The true position concerning the Attributes, in the idiom of theoretical philosophy (hikmat al-nazari), is that the true and relative Attributes are absolutely different from a conceptual viewpoint, and none of them is the same as the Sacred Essence. From the viewpoint of reality, all of

them are the same as the Sacred Essence. However, there are two planes of the Attributes: one is the plane of the Essence and Attributes of the Essence (awsaf dhatiyyah) from which we can abstract Knowledge and Knowledgeability, Power and Powerfulness. The other one is the station of the Attributes of Act (awsaf fi'liyyah), from which, too, one can abstract the concepts of Knowledge and, Knowledgeability, .Power and Powerfulness

As to the negative Attributes, such as His Unlikeness to creation (quddasiyyah) and His Transcendence (subbuhiyyat) and the Names of tanzih (negation of the finite characteristics of the creatures with respect to God), they are implied by the Sacred Essence, and the Sacred Essence is an accidental instance (misdaq bi al-'arad) in .relation to them

Because God, the Exalted, is absolute perfection and the essential instance of absolute perfection. That is because He is the principle of reality and negation of deficiency is among its implications, and perfection is the accidental instance of the negation of deficiency. The gnostics and the people of the heart consider the station of manifestation (maqam al-tajalli) at the plane of the most sacred emanation (fayd al-aqdas) as the source (mabda') of the Names of Essence, and the station of manifestation at the plane of the sacred emanation (fayd al-muqaddas) as the source (of the Attributes of Act.(١

They do not consider the manifestation at the plane of the sacred emanation as 'other' [than the Essence], in the same way that they do not consider it

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.Misbah al-uns, ١٣٠-١٣١; Naqd al-Nusus, fasal ٢, p ٣٨.٣٩ -١

to be the same (ayn) [as the Essence] either. A discussion around this topic will lead up to a discussion of the Names and the Attributes in accordance with their way, and that .will take us beyond our present purpose

And some have referred Divine Attributes to privative matters, considering 'Knowledge' as the non-existence of ignorance and 'Power' as the non-existence of inability. And among the people of ma'rifah, someone whom I have seen insisting on this matter was the august gnostic marhum Qadi Said Qummi,(۱) who, in the course of a discourse mentioned in Sharh al Tawhid (۲) has apparently followed his teacher, the marhum Mullah Rajab 'Ali. Aforetime we had given a reply, based on metaphysical reasoning, to his argument, replying as well to his recourses to the literal meanings of .some traditions

The Priority Of Knowledge To Creation

Among the noble issues referred to in this sacred tradition is that knowledge with its knowables precedes creation in pre-eternity, a matter which itself as well as its character-as to whether it is detailed or non-detailed-are subjects of a great controversy. There is also a controversy as to whether it is additional to the Essence (dhat) or the same, whether it precedes creation or accompanies it, with all the related details, which are in their books? We will confine ourselves to establishing the .truth of the matter and refrain from criticism or refutation of other opinions

It should be known that that which stands established with the people of metaphysical reasoning and the companions of gnosis is that

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Muhammad Sa'id ibn Muhammad Mufid Qummi, known as Qadi Said, was an - ۱ eminent Shi'i Scholar well versed in hadith, philosophy, and literature and strongly inclined towards 'irfan. A pupil of Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani Mulla 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji and Mulla Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi, he held the office of judgeship in Qum and so came to be known as 'Qadi'. He died in ۱۱۰۳/۱۶۹۱-۲ at Qum. Among his works are, al-Arba'un hadith, Asrar al-salat, Hashiyah Uthululjiya, a hashiyah on al-Isharat, Haqiqat al-salat,

a sharh of al-Tawhid by al-Shaykh al-Sad'uq (r), al-Bawariq al-malakutiyyah, and .Kelid al-behesht

.Sharh al-Tawhid iii, ۵۴; MS. in Ayatullah Mar'ashi Public Library, Qum -۲

which has been indicated in this noble tradition, that the knowledge of the known things precedes creation in pre-eternity (azal), and that it is the same as the Essence. That His Knowledge is detailed is indicated by the statement that He was the Seer when there was nothing visible, and Hearer when there was nothing audible, because sight and hearing entail the observation of visibles and audibles in a detailed manner, :as is clear enough. Also, it refers to His detailed knowledge, where it says

فَإِذَا أَحْدَثَ الأَشْيَاءَ وَكَانَ المَعْلُومُ، وَقَعَ العِلْمُ مِنْهُ عَلَى المَعْلُومِ.

So when He brought the things into being and the known came into existence, His .knowledge pertained (corresponded) to the known

That is because His knowledge did not obtain a new subsistence after creation, but pertained to the known after its acquiring subsistence. Now we shall explain the .meaning of the Knowledge pertaining to the known

The explanation of this noble faith-related theme, on the basis of the approach of the authorities among the philosophers, is that, as known from the preceding section, God, the Exalted, is absolute existence and absolute perfection. Absolute existence, with its complete simplicity and unity, encompasses all perfections and all existents, to .utmost perfection

That which is outside the realm of its existence is non-being, deficiency, and inadequacy, and, in a word nothingness (la shay'iyyah). The relation of other planes of existence to that Sacred Essence is that of deficiency to perfection. The knowledge of absolute perfection is the knowledge of perfection in

its absoluteness, without deficiency or inadequacy, and this is the very universal, simple, and detailed disclosure, as not even an iota of existence, from pre-eternity to eternity, is beyond the realm of His knowledge and there can be no trace of plurality and composition in it.(۱)

According to the approach of the gnostics, God, the Exalted, encompasses all the Names and the Attributes at the plane (hadrat) of wahiddiyyah and the station of nominal inclusiveness (jam' asma'i). The fixed archetypes (a'yan thabitah) of all existents are implied in the Divine Names at the plane of inclusiveness prior to creation in pre-eternity, and the absolute manifestation of the Essence (tajalli-ye mullaq al-dhat) from the plane of ahadiyyah and the ghayb of ipseity is the disclosure of all the Names and Attributes and all their implications, which are the fixed archetypes of all the existents, with a single manifestation and disclosure that is absolutely simple (kashf al-basil al-mutlaq).

Hence with the epistemic disclosure (kashf-e'ilmi) at the plane of the manifestation of the most sacred emanation (fayd aqdas) takes place the disclosure of the Essence, the Names, the Attributes and the archetypes without there being any multiplicity or compositeness.(۲)

These two approaches possess utmost firmness and sublimity, but as they are extremely subtle and based on multiple principles, until these preliminaries are not learnt and as long as there is complete and consummate intimacy and thorough immersion, as well as perfect good will towards those who possess Divine gnosis (ulama billah), one can not derive

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۱- Al-Afsar al-arb'ah, vi, ۲۶۳-۲۷۷, safar ۳, mawqif ۳, fasl ۱۲.

۲- Al-Afsar al-arb'ah, ۲۸۰-۲۹۰.

anything from philosophy and the terminology of the men of God and the people of .the heart and from these discourses, which pile bewilderment on bewilderment

Accordingly, it is preferable to give a simpler explanation that is closer to the understanding of the common people. And so we say that the causality and creativity of the Necessary Being, the Exalted, is not like the causality of natural agents which combine or dissociate the existing matters, such as the carpenter who brings about changes in an existing material by arranging and separating, or like the mason who .combines the existing materials

Rather, God, the Exalted, is the Divine Agent Who brings things into being, without, any prior existence, by His very will, and 'His will and' knowledge' by themselves constitute the cause for the appearance and existence of things. Hence the realm of reality is within the purview of His Knowledge and they appear from the hidden :realms of Divine Ipseity (ghayb al-huwiyyat) by His making them manifest

(وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ.)

(And with Him are the keys of the Unseen, none knows them but He. (۶:۵۹

It is said that the realm of concrete existents in relation to the Sacred Essence of God, the Glorious, is like the relation of the mind to the human soul, which brings into being [thoughts, ideas and images] by mere willing and manifests that which lies in the hidden realms of ipseity (ghayb-e- huwiyyat). Hence, the entire realm of reality is ,within His knowledge

:from which they appear and to which they return

(إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ.)

(Verily, We belong to God and to Him do we return.(۱

To offer a clearer explanation, the knowledge of the complete cause of a thing implies the knowledge of that thing. For example, the astronomer's knowledge of the timings of solar and lunar eclipses is due to his knowledge of their causes. By recording the movements of the sun, moon, and the earth, he calculates the time when the earth will be positioned between the sun and the moon, or the moon between the earth and the sun. And should his records be correct his forecast will not fail by a single second. And since the entire chain of causes and effects terminates in the Sacred Essence, the Source of all sources, and since God, the Exalted, has the knowledge of His own Essence, which is the cause of all existents, being the cause He has also the .knowledge of the effects

From among the above-mentioned explanations, everyone adopts one which corresponds to his plane, and some of them are firmer and more adequate in meeting .the purpose than others

The Meaning Of Hearing And Sight In Relation To God

One of the topics discussed by major philosophers in relation to the Names and Attributes of God, the Glorious and the Exalted, is the affirmation of Hearing and Sight' in relation to Him. The majority of the metaphysicians and theologians reduce Hearing and Sight to Knowledge, and the august Shaykh al-Ishraq has reduced (Knowledge to Sight and Hearing.(۲

Each of

۱- ۲:۱۵۶

۲- Sharh Hikmat al-ishraq, ۳۵۸-۳۶۶; al-Asfar, vi, ۴۲۳, safar ۳, mawqif ۶.

them has offered an explanation in this regard whose mention will take us beyond the requirements' of brevity: We will explain the predominant view and approach with an explanation that Will clarify the truth in regard to the Names and the Attributes in .general

It should be known that most of the philosophers and major thinkers, in order to disregard some 'aspects, have reduced some of the Names and Attributes to some others. As it is well known and established among them, the Will of God; the-Exalted, consists of His Knowledge of what is 'appropriate (salah) and of the perfect 'order, like the controversy in relation to Hearing, Sight and Knowledge and reducing each of them to the other, as mentioned: This matter is contrary to the truth and amounts to disregarding these aspects. Because, if what is meant by reducing Will to the Knowledge of what is appropriate, or by reducing Knowledge to Hearing, or Hearing to Knowledge, is that God, the Exalted, does not possess a will or that He does not possess hearing or sight and that Knowledge is considered by them to include Will, .Hearing and Sight, it is an invalid position and an unseemly statement

That is because it implies that God, the Exalted, is the Source of existence without possessing a will or the power of choice. Moreover, the criterion in regard to ascription of the Attributes of perfection to God is that the attribute should be an ,attribute of perfection for existent qua existent

and that it should be an attribute of the very reality of existence and from among the perfections of the very essence What) of existence. And there is no doubt that will is .one of the attributes of perfection of the absolute reality of being

Accordingly, the more existence descends to the lower planes, the weaker it is in respect of will, until it reaches the point where it become totally devoid of it whereat it is consider by all to lack will, like the natures, such as minerals and plants. And the more it rises towards perfection and the higher horizon, will becomes more manifest .in it and stronger

Accordingly, we observe that in the chain of natural existents, when they cross the stages of prime matter, body,-element, mineral, and plant, will and knowledge become manifest in them, and the higher they rise the more this noble faculty becomes perfect, so that the Perfect Man possesses such a perfect will that by his mere will he transforms one element into another and the world of nature is subject to his will. Thus we find that will is an attribute of perfection of existence qua existence, and this meaning is affirmed concerning God's Sacred Essence without .being referred to another meaning

Similarly, Hearing and Sight are, in accordance with confirmed truth, among the perfections of the absolute existent, and the reality of hearing and sight is not one dependent on physical organs and they do not constitute modes of cognition

limited to organs and instrumental means. Rather, the need for organs is for manifestation of the soul's hearing and sight in the realm of nature and the mulk of the body, even as it also needs the pia mater for knowledge to be manifested in the .realm of physical nature

And this deficiency pertains to the world of nature and mulk, not to knowledge, hearing and sight as such, which observe the realities of the world of the Unseen (ghayb) and hear the malakuti speech of the angels and the higher spirits, as in the case of Moses, the Kalimullah (God's interlocutor), who would hear the speech of God in his intimate supplications (munajat), and the Noble Ultimate Prophet; who spoke with the- angels and would see Gabriel in his malakuti form when no other ear would hear what he heard nor any eye see what he saw, though they would be in the same .(gathering with the Messenger at the time of the descent of the revelations (wahy

Moreover, hearing and sight are among modes of cognition which are additional to the principle of knowledge and are other than the' reality of knowledge, and they are among the perfections of absolute existence. Hence their affirmation in relation to God, the Exalted, Who is the very reality of existence and the mainspring of the .perfection of being, is necessary

And should the purpose of those who reduce Will, Hearing, and Sight to Knowledge, or Knowledge to them, be that Knowledge and Will

are posited of God in a single aspect (haythiyyat al-wahidah) and that Hearing, Sight, and Knowledge do not have different aspects in the Sacred Divine Essence, this is true and in accordance with metaphysical proof. However, there is no reason to limit the matter to these Attributes, for all Attributes reduce to the reality of sheer existence, and this matter is not contrary to positing different multiple Attributes for the Divine .Essence, or rather it corroborates it

That is because, as has been clearly established, the nearer an existent is to unity and farther it is from the horizon of multiplicity and freer, it is more inclusive in relation to the names and attributes, so that That which is pure existence, the simple, necessary Reality, glorious is His majesty and majestic is His power, is ultimate unity and simplicity and inclusive of all perfections and possessing all Names and Attributes, and to Him literally apply all concepts of perfection, glory, and beauty, and their applicability to the Sacred Divine is worthier and prior, with all the degrees of .worthiness and priority

To sum up, the stronger and more complete is the unity (wahdah) [of an existent], the applicability of the concepts of perfection to it is greater, and the greater is the number of [its] names and attributes. Conversely, the closer an existent is to the horizon of multiplicity, the lesser is the applicability of the concepts of perfection to it, and this applicability also becomes weaker and closer and similar

to metaphor (majaz). And this is because unity (wahdah) is concomitant (musawiq) with existence and is a perfection of being qua being. The meaning of concomitance here is that although unity and existence are conceptually different, but in external .reality the reality of existence is the same as the reality of unity

Wherever there is multiplicity, there is also to be found deficiency, nonbeing, evil, weakness and disability, and this is for the reason that the lower that existence descends through the planes of deficiency, multiplicity is greater than at all the other planes of existence. The station of the Lord and the Sacred Divine Being, Glorious and Exalted, which is sheer existence, is absolute unity and simplicity, and there is no way .that multiplicity and compositeness should find way into Him

We have pointed out earlier that existence is the principal reality of perfection and the mainspring of glory and beauty. Hence, sheer existence is sheer unity and sheer perfection, and, therefore, sheer unity is sheer perfection. Thus all the Names, Attributes and perfections are true of That which stands at the highest' plane of unity, and the applicability of each of them to It is more justified and prior. Conversely, that which is closer to multiplicity has more of deficiency in it, and the applicability of the concepts of perfection and the names and attributes is deficient in its case and the quality of their applicability is also weak. Hence, God, the Exalted and the Glorious, possesses all the

perfections and encompasses all the Names and Attributes without any of them being reducible to another. Rather, each of them is true of His Sacred Essence in the literal sense, His Hearing, Sight, Will, and Knowledge, all are in their true literal sense .without implying multiplicity in the Sacred Essence in any respect whatsoever

فَلَهُ الأَسْمَاءُ الحُسْنَى وَالأَمْثَالُ العُلْيَا وَالكِبْرِيَاءُ وَالآلاءُ.

To Him belong all the Beautiful Names and the highest metaphors, and all majesty .and bounties

Character Of The Relation Of God's Knowledge To The Knowables

One should know, as pointed out earlier, that all existents, qua existents, with their aspects of ontological perfection, qua aspects of perfection, are known and disclosed to the Sacred Essence of God, the Exalted, with His simple essential knowledge ('ilm al-basil al-dhati) and a single pre-eternal disclosure (kashf al-wahid al-azali). This disclosure, with its very simplicity and complete unity, is detailed so that not an iota of the heavens of spirits nor a particle of the earths of corporeality is outside the realm .(of His knowledge from pre-eternity to eternity (azalan wa abadan

This knowledge and disclosure is in pre-eternity and the same as the Sacred Essence, and the knowables with their conditionings and limits (ta'ayyunat wa hududat), which derive from nonbeing and deficiency, find an accidental occurrence (tahaqquq bi'l-'arad) posterior to creation and relate to Knowledge accidentally, and this accidental relation is posterior to creation. And to this reference is made in the noble :tradition where it is stated

فَلَمَّا أَحْدَثَ الأَشْيَاءَ وَكَانَ المَعْلُومُ، وَقَعَ العِلْمُ مِنْهُ عَلَى المَعْلُومِ.

,And when He brought the things into being

.and the known came into being, His knowledge pertained to the known

It is probable that this statement refers to active knowledge (‘ilm al-fi’li) which is obtained by manifestation (tajalli) through the sacred emanation (fayd muqaddas), and that which is meant by the ‘knowables’ are the knowables-by-essence (ma’lumat bi’l-dhat), which are existential entities (huwiyyat wujudiyyah) which are existential entities (huwiyyat wujudiyyah) related to the sacred emanation and the light of .manifestation

Hence, in accordance with the first probability the meaning of the first statement :would be as follows

فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى بِفَيْضِهِ المُقَدَّسِ وَظَهَرَ الكَوْنُ بِالعَرَضِ وَقَعَ العِلْمُ عَلَى المَعْلُومِ: أىْ ظَهَرَ الفَيْضُ فِى مِرْآهِ المُسْتَفِيضِ بِالعَرَضِ.

When He manifested Himself through His sacred emanation and the accidental being appeared, the knowledge pertained to the known; that is, the emanation appeared in .the mirror of the receiver-by-accident of the emanation

:In accordance with the second probability, it would mean

فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى بِفَيْضِهِ المُقَدَّسِ وَظَهَرَ وُجُودُ الكَوْنِ بِالذَّاتِ: أىْ بِلا حَيْثِيَّهٍ تَقْيِيدِيَّهٍ وَقَعَ الفَيْضُ عَلَى المُسْتَفِيضِ بِالذَّاتِ.

When He manifested Himself through His sacred emanation and the existence of the existents-by-essence became manifest-that is without the limiting aspect-the .emanation pertained to the receiver-by-essence of the emanation

On the basis of both the interpretations, this manifestation through the sacred emanation is not subject to temporal events and changes, and the creation of God, the Exalted; is free from and above any trace of temporality and change, or, rather, from all conditioning and limitation. And since the essential Knowledge (‘ilm al-dhati) is simple in all aspects and encompasses all aspects, active Knowledge

ilm al-fi'li), which is the real sign of God and the manifestation of the essential) Knowledge and its mirror, is completely simple and absolutely one, encompassing the entire circle of existence without there being any conditioning, change, or composition .in it

At the most it is sustained in its essence (mutaqawwam bi al-dhat) by the Sacred Divine Essence and is the very sheerness of dependence, and, in this respect, is annihilated (fani) in Divine Majesty and is the very presence before the Lord of Glory, and therefore it is considered God's knowledge, in the same way that the very creation by the rational soul of intelligible realities in the realm of the intellect and of the imaginary images in the tablet of imagination, are the active knowledge ('ilm al-.(fi'li) of the soul and annihilated (fani) in its essence (dhat

The metaphysicians have said that the relation of the tablet of reality to God is like the relation of the forms of knowables to the soul. Due to this encompassment, simplicity, and influence they have said that God, the Exalted, knows the particulars with His universal knowledge ('ilm al-kulli); that is, the particularly, limitation, and being .contained of the known does not cause limitation in [Divine] knowledge

Hence [Divine] knowledge is encompassing, pre-eternal (qadim wa azali) and unchanging, while the known is contained, limited, temporal, and changing. Those who are unfamiliar with the manner of their speech have been led to imagine that they have- negated God's knowledge of the particulars, taking

kulliyyah) and particularly (juz'iyyah) in the sense current in the jargon of logicians) and lexicographers, ignorant of the fact that these terms have another meaning in the terminology of the people of gnosis (ma'rifah) and at times speculative philosophers (ahl al-nazar) have followed them in this regard. Rather, this conception pertaining to the topic of the knowledge of the Necessary Being, glorious is His Name and exalted is His station, has been borrowed by the metaphysicians from the .gnostics

The Criterion Relating To Positive And Negative Attributes

The criterion relating to the positive and negative Attributes of the Sacred Essence of the Necessary Being, glorious is His Name, is that every attribute pertaining to the attributes of perfection and excellences of beauty that applies to the Principle of the reality of being and the absolute essence of existence, without any dress of conditioning or change from one realm to another, and refers to the actual haecceity and luminous essence of being, is among the Attributes that are necessarily .subsistent and necessarily realized for the Sacred Essence, exalted is Its station

That is because should it not subsist, it would imply either that the Sacred Essence is not sheer existence and absolute being, or that sheer existence is not sheer perfection and absolute beauty. Both of these are false conclusions from the viewpoint of the path of gnosis as well as the way of metaphysical reasoning, as .stands established in its own place

And no attribute and excellence is established for an existent except after its decent to one of the

stages of conditioning and its assumption of one of the forms of limitations and its embracing one of the planes of deficiency with its accompanying limits of finitude and feebleness, and, in brief, that which does not pertain to the essence (dhat) of being and derives from limits and essences (mahiyyat) is from attributes whose negation is necessary and whose realization is impossible in respect of the absolutely perfect Essence. That is because in the same way as the absolutely perfect Essence and Absolute Being is the instance of sheer perfection, it is also the instance of the .(negation of deficiency, limits, non-existences and essences (mahiyyat

And that which is well-known among the authorities, that the negative Attributes reduce, to a single negation, which is the negation of contingency, does not appear to be correct to this author. Rather, in the same way that the Sacred Essence is the essential instance (misdaq dhati) of all attributes of perfection, and none of them reduce to another; as clarified, above, so also it is the accidental instance of the .negation of each of the deficiencies

And one cannot say that non-existences 'and defects make' a single aspect and that there is no distinction between, non-existences (la mayza fi al a'dam); because if one were to consider the matter in the context of actual reality; in the same way that absolute non-existence is a single 'aspect while representing all non-existences, so also absolute existence has a single aspect and is possessor of all

.perfections

Hence, from this viewpoint, which is the consideration of ahadiyyah and of the Unseen of the Unseen (ghayb al ghuyub), one cannot posit any attribute, neither the .real positive, attributes, nor the negative Divine attribute

But from another viewpoint, which is the consideration of the station of wahidiyyah and the inclusion of the Names and Attributes, as there is a multiplicity of positive attributes of perfection, every attribute of perfection implies a negation of the deficiency opposed to it. And in the same aspect that the Sacred Essence is the essential instance of Knower. It is the accidental instance of 'not ignorant,' and as it is 'Powerful,' it is 'not powerless. And as it is established in the science of the Names that among the Names and the positive Attributes there is a relationship by virtue of which some of them encompass and dominate others, which are encompassed and overlooked by them by implication these concepts also apply to the negative Names .and Attributes

Now that we know the criterion of the positive and negative Attributes, we can understand that motion-.which subsists through potentiality and prime matter, and temporality and renewal are in its very essence-does not apply to the Sacred Divine .Essence, the Glorious and the Exalted

And 'speech' (takallum) in the ordinary sense, about which the narrator poses the question, is an attribute that is time-bound and subject to renewal and so does not apply to the Essence of God, the Exalted. But this does not preclude the positing

of ‘essential speech’ (takallum dhati) for God, the Exalted, on the plane of the .(Essence, in a sense that is free from temporality and renewal (huduth

To put this noble topic briefly, the reality of speech does not depend on the vocalization of speech from certain organs. This limitation, pertaining to ordinary language and general usage, derives from habit and familiarity as well as thoughts and ideas. Otherwise there is no limitation or conditioning in the meaning [of speech] itself. ‘Knowledge’ comprises of sheer cognition and the manifesting of a thing to the knower and it is not confined to being cognized through some material means such as the brain, or through such non-material means as the common sense (hiss al-.mushtarak) or the tablet of imagination, for instance

If, supposedly, one were to acquire the knowledge of something through his hand or foot, or see or hear something, it would still be knowledge; hearing, and sight. Similarly, when someone sees, hears and speaks in the world of dreams, all these concepts apply to that [that which is, heard, seen or spoken in dreams] without any .trace of metaphor, although none of the specific sense organs is employed

Hence, the criterion of cognition as such depends on the applicability of these meanings and concepts. The reality of speech is the expression of that which is in one’s mind and consciousness with or without the mediation of any special organ. Even if, supposedly, it should be metaphorical in accordance with language and ,usage

these limitations do not exist in the concepts and meanings themselves and are applicable in accordance with reason. We do not have any philological discussion on the topic of the Names and Attributes, and the purpose here is affirmation of the meanings themselves, though language and usage should not be helpful to their affirmation.

Accordingly, we say that the reality of speech is the expression of one's intent whether or not it occurs through sensible means, and regardless of whether it belongs to the category of sound, words, or aspiration. 'Speech' in this sense is among the attributes of perfection of existence, for [self]manifestation and expression belong to the reality of existence and subsist through the reality of existence, and the more existence ascends towards perfection and strength, its [self-]manifestation and expression become greater, until it reaches the highest horizon and the exalted station of Necessity, which is the Light of lights, and light upon light, and manifestation upon manifestation, expressing that which lies in the Unseen (ghayb) of the station of wahidiyyah (Unity, i.e. at the plane of the sacred emanation), through the unconditioned sacred emanation (fayd al-muqaddas al-itlaqi) and the existential word 'Be!, and expressing, through the most sacred emanation and the essential ahadi manifestation, the absolute ghayb and the stationless station of ahadiyyah (Unity, i.e. at the plane of the most sacred emanation).

And in this ahadi manifestation, the speaker is the ahadi Sacred Essence, and the speech is the most sacred emanation and the manifestation of Essence

tajalli dhati), and the listener the Names and the Attributes. By that very) manifestation, the conditioned expressions (ta'ayyunat) of the Names and the Attributes comply and obtain occurrence in Knowledge (tahaqquq al-'ilmi). In the wahidi manifestation, through the sacred emanation (fayd muqaddas), the speaker is the wahidi Sacred Essence, inclusive of all the Names and the Attributes, and speech is the manifestation itself, and the listener and the compliant one on the [plane of] realization are the cognitive archetypes (a'yan 'ilmiyyah) implied in the Names and-'!the Attributes, which obtain concrete realization by the command 'Be

فَإذَا قَالَ لِكُلِّ عَيْنٍ أَرَادَ إيجَادَهَا: كُنْ، فَيُطِيعُ الأَمْرَ الإلَهِيَّ، فَيَكُونُ وَيَتَحَقَّقُ.

So when He says 'Be! To every archetypes that He wills to create, it complies with the Divine command, and it as and actualized

.

And there are many traditions, which we have not mentioned, that may be cited as .evidence on this topic. And all Praise belongs to God firstly and lastly

Thirty-Seventh Hadith: The Knowledge Of God

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَمَّنْ ذَكَرَهُ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَمْرَانَ عَنِ الفَضْلِ بْنِ السَّكَنِ عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِيرُ المُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: إعْرِفُوا اللهَ بِاللهِ وَالرَّسُولَ بِالرِّسَالَهِ وَأُولِى الأَمْرِ بِالأَمْرِ بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَالعَدْلِ وَالإحْسَانِ.

With a continuous chain of authorities reaching up to Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from 'Ali ibn Muhammad, from someone who reported it, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Muhammad ibn Humran, from al-Fadl ibn al-Sakn, from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) who said: The Commander

of the Faithful (A) said, "Know God through God, the Messenger through the Messengership, and the wali al-amr by his commanding to what is right (amr bil-ma'ruf), his justice and kindness."(1)

Exposition

There is an evident difference between the terms 'irfan and 'ilm, recognition and knowledge. It is said that 'ilm (knowledge) in its original sense specifically relates to the universals, and ma'rifah (recognition, gnosis) is specific for that which relates to particulars and persons. They say that an 'arif billah (a gnostic of God) is someone who knows God through direct witnessing (mushahadah huduriyyah) and an 'alim billah is someone who attains the knowledge of God through philosophical proofs.

Some say that 'ilm and 'irfan differ in two respects; first, in respect of the related object (of cognition), as mentioned above, and secondly, a prior state of forgetfulness is assumed in ma'rifah. Hence when something becomes the object of cognition for the first time, one is said to acquire its 'ilm, and when something was known and forgotten to be known for a second time, one is said to obtain its ma'rifah. And the 'arif is called 'arif because of his recollection of his existence and stages of life preceding his natural and mulki existence, and some of the people of the path of wayfaring claim to have remembered the world of dharr.(2)

They say that if the veil of physical nature, which causes forgetfulness and negligence, were to be removed from the wayfarer's eyes, he would recall the previous worlds

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1- Usul al-Kafi, i, ۴, "kitab al-tawhid," "bab annahu la yu'arafu illa bih," hadith ۱.

2- This is referred to in the following Qur'anic verse: And when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their backs, their seed (dhurriyyah), and made them testify touching themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify-[this], lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'As for us, we were unaware of this.' (۷:۱۷۲)

through which he has passed. And someone from among the people of spirituality (dhawq) would say that the reality of the spiritual ascent (mi'raj) is the recollection of the past days. When one tries to go back into the past to recall one's earlier states, each of us, in accordance with the difference among individuals, can recollect things .when he was seven, five, or three years old

It is rare to find someone who has recollections from earlier years. It is said of the Shaykh al-Ra'is (Ibn Sina) that he claimed to have memories from the first moments of his birth. he would say that it was possible for one to have recollections which go back to earlier times, for instance, when one has been in one's mother's womb or in one's father's loins, and remember all the developments that one has undergone in the realm of mulk, going back to the previous realms until the higher malakut, the realm of the jabarut, the higher jabarut, culminating in the recollection of his state in Divine knowledge, and this recollection is the reality of mi'raj and the ultimate height .(of spiritual ascent. (Here end his words

Although this matter may be true in itself, but interpreting the reality of mi'raj as the regressive return into the past does not fit with. the exquisite teaching of gnosis and the creed of the people of the heart. Rather, the reality of spiritual ascent is the curvilinear spiritual movement with which is completed the circle

of existence, culminating in the return to the reality of the ghayb of all that which is in the chain of shuhud.

This takes place in the form of a curvilinear movement along all ascending arc, whereas this regressive returning movement is contrary to the Divine law (sunnah) active in the realm of being, especially in respect of the prophets, particularly their Seal (S). This kind of coursing is like the absorption in the love of the Essence of the Glorious One of one kind of angels, who are bewildered and absorbed, and totally oblivious of multiplicity, not knowing that any man or world has been created.

The perfect gnostic Shaykh Shahabadi, may my spirit be his ransom, would say that the spiritual state of Hadrat Adam, play peace be upon him, was such that he was oblivious of his own physical nature (mulk) and was totally absorbed in the world of ghayb and the realm of the Divine, and this movement of Adam (A) negated his humanity (adamiyyat). Then God, the Exalted, gave Satan power over him in order to turn him towards the tree of nature, to deflect him from the gravity of the malakut towards the realm of mulk.

As to the phrase, والعدل والإحسان (justice and kindness), apparently these two are in conjunction with الأمر بالمعروفِ meaning (commanding to what is right): إعرفوهم بِالأَمْرِ بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَالعَدْلِ وَالإحْسَانِ. Or it is probably a conjunct of the phrase إعرفوا الله بالله meaning:

إعرفوهم بِالأَمْرِ بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَالعَدْلِ وَالإحْسَانِ.

The Meaning Of The Phrase 'Know God By God'

It should he known

that eminent scholars have given different explanations in expounding the phrase in the noble tradition, each in accordance with the character of his scholarship المعروف and philosophical approach. Here we will briefly mention some of their views for the .sake of benefiting from the barzakah of the speech of the great ones

First is that which has been stated by the Thiqat al-Islam Kulayni (R), which, to put it briefly, is that God, the Exalted, has created the bodies, the spirits, and the lights, and He is their sole creator, without anyone sharing their creation with Him, nor is He is like any of them. Hence whoever likens God to any of them, does not know God; but should he negate God's similarity to them he would he knowing God by God (Here end his words).(۱) It is strange that Hadrat Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Q) has imagined these words (of Kulayni) to he part of the tradition and offered elaborate interpretations of it (in accordance with his own philosophical approach.(۲

Second is the statement of Shaykh Saduq (R) whose gist is that knowing God through God means that should we know God with our intellects, God, the Exalted, is the one who has bestowed there; and should we know Him through the prophets and God's Proof, hujaj (A), then God has raised them and made them His Proofs; and should we (know Him through our souls, God is their creator.(۳

Third is that which has been indicated by Sadr al-Muta'allihin, according to which the

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.Usul al-Kafi, i, ۸۵, "kitab al-tawhid;" "bab annalhu la yurafu illa bih," under hadith ۱ -۱

.Sharh Usul al-Kafi, pp. ۲۳۳-۲۳۴ -۲

.Tawhid, p. ۲۹۰ bab ۴۱ -۳

way to the ma'rifah of God is of two kinds. One of them is through epiphany and direct gnosis, and the second is through negation of His likeness to anything (tanzih) and assertion of Ibis transcendence (taqdis). As the first way is not possible except for the prophets and the perfect ones, the second path has been mentioned in the tradition (here ends his statement).(۱) This interpretation of his is based on his taking the statements of Shaykh Kulayni as part of the noble tradition and as the exposition of .(the words of Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin by Hadrat Sadiq (A

Fourth is the interpretation of the muhaqqiq Fayd (M). The gist of it is that every being has an essence (mahiyyah) and an existence (wujud). The essences of things consist of their own particular delimitations and their essential aspect, whereas their existence consists of their Godward aspect, by virtue of which their entities subsist .and their effects, potency, and efficiency become manifest

Hence if one were to take the essences of things into view and their delimitations, and try to know God through their aspect of contingency and their dependence on God, he would be knowing God by things not by God. Moreover, this knowledge and gnosis is innate and not acquired. But if one were to know God through the existential aspect of things, which is their Godward aspect, he would be knowing God by God, and it is this Godward aspect of things which is referred to in these

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۱- Sharh Usul al-Kafi, pp. ۲۳۳-۲۳۴.

:noble verses

(وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ.)

(He is with you where you may be. (۵۷:۴

(كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ.)

(Everything is fated to perish save His Face. (۲۸:۸۸

Fifth is the probability that has occurred to the mind of this author, and that will be understood after an introduction relating to the science of the Names and Attributes, which is as follows. There are several considerations for the Sacred Essence of God, .Almighty and Exalted, each of which has been designated by a term

One of them is the Essence when considered as such. In accordance with this consideration, the Divine Essence is absolutely unknowable, beyond any name or description, and beyond the reach of the aspirations of the gnostics and the yearnings of the people of the heart and the awliya'. At times it is expressed as the 'inaccessible :phoenix' ('anqa al-mughrib) in the idiom of the gnostics

عنقا شکار کسی نشود دام باز گیر

(Take thy net away for none can ever catch the phoenix.(۱

:and at times referred to as 'ama' or 'amd

رُوِیَ أَنَّهُ قِیلَ لِلنَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَیْهِ وَآلِهِ: أَیْنَ کَانَ رَبُّکَ قَبْلَ أنْ یَخْلُقَ الخَلقَ؟ قَالَ: فِی عَمَاءٍ.

It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) was asked, "Where was your Lord before He (created the creation?" He replied, "In an ama (cloud)."(۲

And at times, it is referred to as the 'Occult of the Occult' (ghayb al-ghuyub) or the Absolute Occult (ghayb al-mutlaq) as well as with other terms, although all such terms fail to express it. In accordance with the gnostic approach

۱- Hafiz: عنقا شکار کسی نشود دام بازگیر کانجا همیشه باد به دست است دام را

۲- Awali al-li'ali, i, ۵۴; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, iv, ۱۲, with a small difference of wording.

and according to a kind of metaphysical proof, the terms ‘anqa, ‘ama’ and other terms do not apply to this station.

Another consideration is that of the Essence at the plane of occult conditioning (ta’ayyun ghaybi) and the non-existence of absolute manifestation (‘adam al-zuhur al-mutlaq), which is called the station of ahadiyyah (unity at the plane of unity), and it is with this station that most of those [aforementioned] terms are consistent.

At this station, the Names of Essence, in accordance with the terminology of the adept in the Science of the Names, are considered, such as the Absolute Inward (Batin al-mutlaq), the Absolute First (Awwal al-mutlaq), the Most Exalted (al-’Ali), and the Greatest (al-’Azim), as can be inferred from the tradition of al-Kafi that the first Names that God assumed for Himself were al-’Ali and al-’Azim.(۱)

Another of the considerations of the Essence is in accordance with the station of wahidiyyah (unity at the plane of multiplicity) and the inclusion of the Names and the Attributes. This station is referred to by such terms as ‘the station of wahidiyyah,’ ‘the all-inclusive station of ahadiyyah of the Names’ (ahadiyyat al-jam’ al-asma) and ‘the inclusive inclusiveness’ (jam’ al- jam’), and so on. This station, in consideration of the inclusive ahadiyyah (ahadiyyat al-jam’) is called the station of the Greatest Name (ism al-a’zam) and the station of Allah, the All-inclusive Divine Name (ism al-jami’ Allah).

Another consideration is that of the Essence at the plane of the Sacred Emanation (fayd al-muqaddas) and the station of the

p: ۹۷۸

۱- This is a reference to the following tradition of Usul al-Kafi, i, ۱۱۳, “kitab al-tawhid,” “bab huduth al-asma’,” hadith ۲: عَنِ ابْنِ سِنَانٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: هَلْ كَانَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَارِفاً بِنَفْسِهِ قَبْلَ أنْ يَخْلُقَ الخَلَقَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ: يَرَاهَا وَيَسْمَعُهَا؟ قَالَ: مَا كَانَ مُحْتَاجاً إِلَى ذَلِكَ لأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَسْأَلُهَا وَلا يَطْلُبُ مِنْهَا. هُوَ نَفْسُهُ وَنَفْسُهُ هُوَ. قُدْرَتُهُ نَافِذَةٌ فَلَيْسَ يَحْتَاجُ أَنْ يُسَمِّيَ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَكِنَّهُ اخْتَارَ لِنَفْسِهِ أَسْمَاءً لِغَيْرِهِ يَدْعُوهُ بِهَا لأَنَّهُ إِذَا لَمْ يُدْعَ بِاسْمِهِ لَمْ يُعْرَفْ. فَأَوَّلُ مَا اخْتَارَ لِنَفْسِهِ: العَلِيَّ العَظِيمَ، لأَنَّهُ أَعْلَى الأَشْيَاءِ كُلِّهَا. فَمَعْنَاهُ: اللهُ، وَاسْمُهُ: العَلِيُّ العَظِيمُ، هُوَ أَوَّلُ أَسْمَائِهِ؛ عَلا عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ. It is narrated on the authority of Muhammad ibn Sinan that he said, “I asked Abu al-Hasan al-Rida (A), ‘Did God, Almighty and Exalted, know Himself before

He created the creation?' 'Yes,' he replied. I said, 'Did He see it and hear it?' He said, "He had no need for that, for He neither required anything of it nor sought from it. He was His Self and His Self was He. His power was all-pervasive, so He had no need to name Himself. But He chose for Himself Names for others to call Him by their means, for if He were not called by His Name He would not have been known. So the first that He chose for Himself was: 'The Most Exalted, the Greatest' (al-Ali al 'Azim), for He is exalted above all things. Its meaning is Allah and His name is al-'Ali al-'Azim. It is the ".first of His names, exalted is He above everything

manifestation of the Names and the Attributes in the mirror of the Archetypes (a'yan), as the station of wahidiyyah is through manifestation of the Most Sacred Emanation (fayd al-aqdas). This station of manifestation of Names is also called 'the station of absolute manifestation' (zuhur itlaqi) and 'the station of divinity' (maqam al-uluhiyyah) and 'the station of Allah' in accordance with the considerations relating to the Names (and the Attributes, as explained by this author in Misbah al-hidayah.(١)

It should be known that these considerations, which exist in the terminology of the gnostics and the people of the heart, are indicative of the (hierarchic) scheme of manifestation (tajalliyat) of the Truth as reflected in their clear hearts, and those tajalliyat, in accordance with the stations and ranks of the wayfaring of the awliya' and the stages and phases of the journey of Godward wayfarers, begin at the plane of the manifestation (zuhur) of Names and Attributes, which, as said, is also called the :station of divinity or 'the station of Allah', and the verse

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (٢۴:٣۵

is considered by them to refer to it. And they terminate at the plane of the ghayb of altadiyyah and end at the plane of the Names of the Essence (asma' dhatiyyah) and the Exclusive Name (ism musta'thar), which is the ultimate goal and end of wayfaring. And it may be said that the aforementioned plane is the one referred to in these words of

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١- Misbah al-hidayah ila al-khilafah wa al-wilayah, pp. ٣٣-٣٨.

:God, the Exalted

(فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى.)

(A bow's length away or nearer. (۵۳:۹

Now, after this introduction, we say that as long as man seeks the Truth and journeys towards God with the feet of thought and philosophical argumentation, his wayfaring is rational and epistemic ('aqli 'ilmi), and he is not one of the people of ma'rifah and .gnosis

Rather, his vision is obstructed by the greatest and the biggest of veils, whether he seeks the Truth through viewing the essences (mahiyyat) of things, which constitute the curtains of darkness, or he seeks It through their existences, which constitute the .curtains of light, as indicated in the statements of marhum Fayd

The first condition for the realization of wayfaring towards God is to abandon the dark abode of the self and self-seeking. In the same way as, in external and sensible journeying, as long as one remains in one's house and dwelling, one's journey is not actualized no matter however one may imagine oneself to be traveling and regard oneself as a traveler, in the Shari'ah, too, one is not considered a traveler without leaving one's home and hometown and traversing a distance from where the traces .of one's town become invisible

Similarly, the gnostic journey towards God and the spiritual migration does not take place without leaving the dark house of the self and the disappearance, of its traces. So long as the walls of particularity are visible and the inviting call (adhan) of multiplicity can be heard, one is not

a traveler, though one may imagine oneself to be in journey and claim to be :wayfaring. God, the Exalted, has said

(وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ.)

Whoever leaves his home as an emigrant towards God and His Messenger, then (depth overtakes him, his reward has indeed fallen on God. (۴:۱۰۰

After that the Godward wayfarer leaves his house with the feet of spiritual exercise (riyadah) and complete Godwariness (taqwa), without taking along with him the burden of attachments and particularity, and the Godward journey is realized, the first manifestation (tajalli) of the Exalted Truth that appears in his sacred heart is the manifestation at the plane of Divinity and the plane of manifestation (zuhur) of the .Names and Attributes

This tajalli is also in a graded order, from the partial to the inclusive Names, in accordance with the strength and weakness of the wayfarer's heart and his wayfaring-whose details cannot be contained in this brief discourse.-until it culminates in the detachment from all finite expressions (ta'yyunat) of the world of existence, whether pertaining to himself or others, which in the subsequent stages and phases also derive from the self. And after absolute detachment, there occurs the tajalli at the station of Divinity and the station of Allah, which is the station of ahadiyyah of inclusion of all manifesting Names, and here the wayfarer attains to the Know) إعْرِفُوا اللهَ بِاللهِ [preliminary and lower degree of [gnosis represented by the phrase God by

.(God

At the outset of the gnostic's attainment to this station and stage, he becomes annihilated (fani) in that tajalli, and if eternal grace were to embrace him, he obtains a recovery (uns) and the toil and forlornness of the journey is cast away. He returns to himself, and not being content with this station starts on the journey with the feet of love. In this journey, the love of the Truth is the origin and end of wayfaring, as well as .the journey itself

He walks in the lights of the tajalliyat and hears the call of 'Come on!' (taqaddam),(١) until, at the station of wahidiyyah, the Names and Attributes shine on his heart in a graded order until there manifests the station of inclusive ahadiyyah and the station of the Greatest Name, which is the Name 'Allah' and at this stage the words إعْرِفُوا اللَهَ بِاللهِ are fulfilled at an exalted plane. And after this there is another station which is now .beyond our present purpose

In accordance with what has been mentioned, the station of the knowledge of the Messenger by Messengership and of [the knowledge of] the Uli al-amr by amr bil-maruf, 'adl and ihsan, has a subtle gnostic explanation which requires an elaborate discussion of the stations of Messengership (risalah) and sainthood (wilayah), though it is outside the scope of these pages, having been treated in the aforementioned .(treatise (Misbah al-hidayah

Traditions Dealing With The Higher Teachings Should Not Be Interpreted In A Plebeian Sense

It should not be imagined that these expositions of ours of the noble tradition on the basis

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١- "Taqaddam," said by, God to the Prophet during his cosmic journey, the mi'raj.

of the approach of the gnostics are meant to confine the meaning of the tradition to them, or that they are conjectures about the realm of the occult or interpretation based on subjective opinion. 'The purpose, rather, is to dispel the notion that the meanings of traditions relating to the ma'arif (the higher teachings) are limited to .common plebeian meanings

Those who are familiar with the style of speech of the Imams (A) know that the traditions relating to the ma'arif and sacred doctrine do not correspond to ordinary plebeian understanding of these teachings and that they contain the most subtle of philosophical conceptions and the most profound teachings of gnosis. Anyone who refers to the Usul al-Kafi or the Tawhid of Shaykh Saduq (M) will confirm this matter. And this does not preclude the point that these Imams of the gnostics and knowers of God should have made their noble statements in such a comprehensive manner that every group profits from them in accordance with it own creed and approach, and none of then has a right to confine their meanings to what they have understood from them. For instance, this noble tradition can be given a common-sense interpretation .in accordance with ordinary language and literal meanings

can be said to mean that one should know God إعْرِفُوا اللهَ بِاللهِ For example the statement through the effects of His craftsmanship and their perfect design, which are the works of the Divine. Similarly, it may be said, the Messenger is

to be known through his Messengership and the consummate effects of his call. The Uli al-amr is to be known by the quality of his actions, such as commanding to what is right and his implementing justice. Hence each of them is to be known through his effects.

This does not preclude that the tradition should have a subtler meaning which may be said to be its inward sense (batn), and beyond this meaning there might be another subtler layer of meaning which may be referred to as the inward of the inward (batn al-batn). In fine, one should not liken the speech of the awliya' to the likes of oneself, in the same way as it is wrong and improper to compare oneself to them, and we cannot elaborate here this point which has been stated concisely here.

An amazing thing is what certain persons say by the way of objection and challenge, that the statements of the Imams of guidance (A) were made for the guidance of the people and that they should be in accordance with the understanding of the common people, and beyond that nothing that has any profound philosophical or gnostic meaning should emerge from them. This is an atrocious and a most ugly slander whose cause, in addition to some other matters, is a lack of reflection on the traditions of the Prophetic Household (A) and neglect of their close study.

Strange! If the prophets and the awliya' do not teach the people the subtleties of

tawhid and the higher teachings, then who is to do that? Is it the case that there are no subtleties involved in tawhid and the other teachings and that all people are equal in respect of their understanding of the ma'arif? Is the understanding of the Commander of the Faithful (A) the is same as ours and that it consists of the ordinary plebeian notions? Or is it the case that it is different, but it is not necessary, or even desirable, to teach them to others? Or is it that it is neither necessary nor desirable, and that the Imams (A) did not give them any importance? Did they, who did not ignore or omit even the details of the etiquette and manners of sleeping, dining, and going to the toilet, have neglected the Divine teachings, which are the ultimate ?'aspiration of the awliya

What is more amazing is that some of these same people who deny this matter resort to such hairsplitting discussions on traditions relating to fiqh tradition wherein common usage and understanding are definitely the criterion of meaning and interpretation-that even Reason itself is incapable of understanding them, to say !nothing of commonsense, and yet they subscribe to the spontaneity of normal usage

Whoever has any doubt in this regard should refer to the discussions [mentioned in the works of fiqh] relating to the topic of 'ala al-yad and similar general juristic rules, especially those which pertain to transactions (mu'amalat)?(١) This was a digression from the topic

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١- This is a reference to a well-known fiqhi rule which states: عَلَى اليَدِ مَا أَخَذَتْ حَتَّى تُؤَدِّيَهُ.

and an act of defiance of the pen. And God, the Blessed and Exalted, is witness that this author has in view no purpose by this discourse other than to familiarize his .brothers-in-faith with the Divine teachings

وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ مِنَ الزَّلَلِ وَالفَشَلِ وَالكَسَلِ. وَالحَمْدُ للهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

I beseech God's forgiveness from lapses and front lethargy and laziness, and all .praise is God's, firstly and lastly

Thirty-Eighth Hadith: The Meaning Of God's Creation Of Adam In His Image

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إلَى الشَّيْخِ الجَلِيلِ عِمَادِ الإسْلام مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِي، رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ بَحْرٍ عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ الخَزَّازِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَمَّا يَرْوُونَ أَنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ، فَقَالَ: هِيَ صُورَةٌ مُحْدَثَةٌ مَخْلُوقَةٌ. وَاصْطَفَاهَا اللهُ وَاخْتَارَهَا عَلَى سَائِرِ الصُّوَرِ المُخْتَلِفَهِ، فَأَضَافَهَا إلَى نَفْسِهِ كَمَا أَضَافَ الكَعْبَةَ إلَى نَفْسِهِ وَالرُّوحَ إلَى نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: (بَيْتِي) (وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي.)

With my chain of authorities reaching up to the august shaykh, the Pillar of Islam, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from a group of our Companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from his father, from 'Abd Allah ibn Bahr, from Abu Ayyub al-Khazzaz, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, who said: I asked Abu Ja'far (A) concerning that which is narrated, that God created Adam (A) in His form (surah literally, form, image). He replied, "It is a form that was originated and created. He elected it and chose it over all the other different forms and attributed it to Himself, in the same way

that He has attributed the Ka'bah and the Spirit (ruh) to Himself, saying: 'My House (٢:١٢٥, ٢٢:٢۶),' and 'I breathed into Him of My Spirit. (١۵:٢٩, ٣٨:٧٢)'(١)

Exposition

The tradition mentioned in the first part of this noble tradition was one which has been well-known all along since the times of the Imams (A) to our own times, and its has been continually cited in the books of the Shi'ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah. Hadrat Baqir (A) has confirmed the authenticity of its origin while explaining its meaning.

However, there is a tradition reported by Shaykh Saduq in 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida with his chain of authorities from the Eighth of the Imams (A) whose meaning is as follows:

Husayn ibn Khalid says, "I said to Hadrat Rida (A), 'O Son of the Messenger of God, the people narrate that the Messenger of God (A) said, "God created Adam in His own image." 'The Imam said, 'God damn them! They have omitted the first part of the tradition. The Messenger of God (S) passed by two men who were abusing each other. The Prophet heard one of them say to his companion, "May God disfigure your face and of everyone who looks like you!" Thereat the Messenger of God (S) said, "O servant of God! Don't say that to your brother, for God, Almighty and Glorious, created Adam in his (His) image."'(٢)

On this basis, marhum Majlisi has ascribed the tradition of Imam Baqir (A) to taqiyyah (dissemblance), and he has also suggested the probability

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١- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi i, ١٣۴ "kitab al-tawhid," "bab al-ruh," hadith ۴.

٢- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida, i, ١١٩, bab ١١, hadith ١٢. The text of the tradition is as follows: عَنِ الحُسَيْنِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِلرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إنَّ النَّاسَ يَرْوُونَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ: (إنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.) فَقَالَ: قَاتَلَهُمُ اللهُ! لَقَدْ حَذَفُوا أَوَّلَ الحَدِيثِ: إنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مَرَّ بِرَجُلَيْنِ يَتَسَابَّانِ، فَسَمِعَ أحَدَهُمَا يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ: قَبَّحَ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ وَوَجْهَ مَنْ يُشْبِهُكَ. فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَهُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، لا تَقُلْ هَذَا لأَخِيكَ فَإنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

that this statement of the Imam might be based on the presumption of acceptance [of the authenticity or the apparent import of the tradition](1) Such a probability is very remote. That which is probable is that the tradition of Hadrat Rida (A) refers to the first tradition, where the meaning of "Adam" in the last part of the tradition where it :states

إنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

.Verily, God created Adam in His image

refers to God, the علی صـورته may be that of the human species and the pronoun in Exalted. And Hadrat Rida (A) considering that the narrator was incapable of understanding the meaning of the hadith, related the opening part of the tradition so that that person may imagine that 'Adam'- means the father of the human race, with .referring to that man; so take note علی صورته the pronoun in

And perhaps both the traditions are genuine in their origin and import, and the Messenger of God (S) might have stated the noble tradition without any previous background-and that is the tradition whose explanation is given by Hadrat Baqir (A) and, on another occasion, he might have made the statement with that background and Imam Rida (A) diverted the discussion to the other hadith with a background due to the incapacity of the narrator in understanding its meaning. An evidence that علی صوره الرحمان :supports this suggestion is that in some traditions there occur the word and This is علی صورته in the image of the All-beneficent)(2) instead of)

p: ۹۸۸

۱- Al-Majlisi, Mirat al-'uqul, ii, ۸۴, "kitab al-tawhid," bab al-ruh, hadith ۴.

۲- Sadr al-Muta'allihin, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim, ii, ۲۳۵; Ibn 'Arabi, Futuhat al-Makkiyyah, ed.'Uthman Yahya, i, ۷۸.

.not consistent with the tradition of the 'Uyun

Moreover, even if it be assumed that this noble tradition is not authentic (in its import), its meaning is implicit in the noble traditions, as will be explained, God willing. Now we .shall turn to explaining the meanings of the words of the noble tradition

As to the word 'Adam,' the Sihah states, "Originally it is with two hamzah's, for it pertains to the form af'al, and the second hamzah has been altered into an alif, and when it is to be given a vowel sound it is changed into waw, whereat its plural is ".awadim

The reason that Adam, the father of the human race (abu al-bashar) wag given this name is perhaps because he was had a brown complexion (asmar al-lawn), as according to the lexicons al-adama min al-nas means someone who is brownish (al-asmar). And according to some traditions Adam was named so because he came from the adim of the earth(۱) adim being in the sense of 'face' and adim al-ard means the .surface of the earth

As to the expression 'ala Suratih, Surah in the lexicon is in the sense of picture and form, and it may be said that it has a general meaning common to different notions in which the commonality consists of the thingness of a thing and its actuality (fi'liyyat). However, everything has an actuality in respect of which it is said to possess a form .((dhu al-Surah) and that actuality is called form (Surah

The

۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Ilal al-sharayi', i, ۲۶. The text of the tradition is as follows: عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَیْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا سُمِّیَ آدَمُ آدَمَ لأَنَّهُ خُلِقَ مِنْ أَدِیمِ الأَرْضِ.

application of the term ‘form’ in the terminology of the philosophers to matters that are inclusive of a thing’s actuality and thingness is not contrary to its lexical meaning, and is not a technical or special term. Shaykh Abu ‘Ali Sina, the chief of the Islamic philosophers, in the part on metaphysics of his book al-Shifa’, says, “At times Surah is applied to any configuration and act that is in a single or composite recipient so that its movements and accidents are called surah. Surah (form) is also applied to something by virtue of which matter is sustained in actuality; hence, the intellectual substances .((jawahir ‘aqliyyah) and accidents cannot be called suwar (forms

And surah is applied to something by means of which matter becomes perfect, though it should not be sustained by it in actuality, such as health and that towards which a thing moves by its own nature (tab’). Also, surah is applied to the species (naw’), genus, and differentia of a thing, or to all of them. And the universality of the universal ”.in the particulars is also surah

Reflection on all the instances of the usage of surah shows that in all of them the criterion is actuality and it is used univocally in all the cases of its use, to the extent .(that even God, the Exalted, is called surat al-suwar (the actuality of all actualities

As to the word istafaha, safwah means something pure and purged from impurity (kudurat) and istifa’ has the sense of taking

that which is clear and pure (safi) and is implied in its meaning. However, Jawhari and others have considered it to mean ikhtiyar (choosing), and so they have also considered ikhtiyar to mean isitifa' in the lexicons. This is, however, an explanation in terms of that which is implied, as ikhtiyar also means taking that which is good (khayr) and meritorious, and in this respect coincides with istifa' in external reality, though it is .not synonymous with it

As to the word al-Ka'bah, it is the name of the House of the God. Some have said that it has been called Ka'bah due to its resemblance to a cube (muka'ab) or due to its square shape,(۱) and muka'ab in the terminology of mathematicians is a body with six .equal planes perpendicular to one another

As to the word al-ruh, in the terminology of men of traditional medicine ruh (spirit) is described as "a subtle vapor formed in an animal's heart due to the heat of the blood." They state that "the heart has two sides. One of them is on the right, wherein blood is drawn from the lever and there it releases a vapor due to the heart's heat: Those vapors flow through the left side of the heart becoming refined there due to the ".actions of the heart, and from it the animal spirit is constituted

Then it flows through the blood vessels due to the expansion and contraction of the heart, in the manner mentioned in the related

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Al-Tabrisi, Majma' al-bayan, exegesis of ۵:۹۷; Qamus al-lughah, under k-'-b, - ۱ .Ka'bah

works. Thus, the source of this animal spirit is the heart and its channels are the blood vessels. At times the term spirit (ruh) is applied to the blood centered in the lever, and its channels are the jugular veins, and that is called the 'natural spirit' (ruh al-tabi'i). So also, in the terminology of the philosophers 'spirit' is often applied to the psychic spirit (ruh al-nafsani), which originates in the brain and its channel are the nerves, and that is a manifestation and lower form of the immaterial spirit pertaining to [the realm of Divine] command (amr), which is a Divine mystery (sir al-subhani) and the 'spirit of God' (ruhullah), referred to in His words:

(وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي.)

(And I breathed into him (i.e. Adam) of My spirit.(١)

Hereafter, God willing, we will explain that this spirit is the one breathed by the Divine breath and that it is that which is the chosen and elect (mustafa wa mukhtar) of the Real, Glorious and Exalted.

Adam Is The Complete Manifestation Of God And The Greatest Name Of God

It should be known that the people of gnosis (ma'rifah) and the companions of the heart say that for each of the Divine Names there is a Form (farah) at the plane of wahidiyyah, which is subject to the tajalli (revelation) pertaining to the Most Sacred Effusion (al-fayd al-aqdas) at the plane of Divine knowledge (hadrat al-'ilmiyyah), by virtue of the Divine Self-love and seeking the Keys of the Hidden, which no one knows except Him.(٢)

(And that Form is called the preexisting essence ('ayn al-thabit

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١- ۱۵:۲۹, ۳۸:۷۲.

٢- A reference to verse ۶:۵۹. (وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ.) And with Him are the keys of the Unseen, none knows them but He. (۶:۵۹)

in the terminology of the People of God (ahl Allah). And with this tajalli, by virtue of the Most Sacred Effusion are realized, first, the ta'ayyunat (determinations) of the Names, and, by virtue of this very ta'yyun of the Names are realized the Forms of the Names, which are the essences (a'yan al-thabitah).

The first Name manifested with the tajaili of ahadiyyah and the Most Sacred Effusion at the epistemic plane of wahidiyyah (hadrat al-'ilmiyyah-ye wahidiyyah) and which becomes the mirror of that tajalli, is the Greatest All-inclusive Divine Name (ism al-a'zam al-jami' al-ilahi) and the station of the named of 'Allah,' which, from the aspect of the Hidden, is the very tajalli through the Most Sacred Effusion, and in the tajalli of manifestation of perfect clarity and luminosity is the same as the all-inclusive station of wahidiyyah from one viewpoint, and the plurality of Names from another viewpoint. The ta'ayyun of the all-inclusive Name and its Form consists of the essence of the Perfect Man and the Muhammadan Reality, haqiqat al-Muhammadiyyah (S).

Hence the Sacred Effusion is the manifestation of the objectifying tajalli of the Most Sacred Effusion, and the station of Divinity is the manifestation of the tajalli of the station of wahidiyyah, and the Greatest Spirit (ruh al-azam) is the manifestation of the tajalli of the ideal essence of the Perfect Man, and all other existents pertaining to the Names, Knowledge and objective reality are the universal and particular manifestations of these realities and subtleties, in accordance

with an exquisite explanation that cannot be contained in this brief discourse and (whose details we have mentioned in the treatise Misbah al-hidayah.(١

From here, it is known that the Perfect Man is the manifestation of the all-inclusive Name and the mirror of tajalli of the Greatest Name, and to this matter these are :many references in the Qur'an and Sunnah. God, Exalted, has said

(وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا.)

(And He taught Adam the Names, all of them. (٢:٣١

This Divine instruction took place in respect to the inmost being of Adam through his Hidden, all-inclusive fashioning with the Hands of Beauty and Majesty (jamal wa jalal) at the plane of wahidiyyah. Similarly, the fashioning of his form and appearance in the visible world ('alam al-shahadat) took place through the manifestation of the Hands of Majesty and Beauty in the mirror of physical nature (tabi'at). And God, the Exalted, :has said

(إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...)

(We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth. (٣٣:٧٢

and the 'Trust' (amanah) in the creed of the gnostics is the absolute wilayah, of which no being except man is worthy. This absolute wilayah is the same as the station of :Sacred Effusion to which reference is made in the Noble Scripture in His statement

(كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ.)

(Everything is fated to perish save His Face. (٢٨:٨٨

And in a tradition of the noble al-Kafi, Imam Muhammad Baqir (A) is cited as having :said

نَحْنُ وَجْهُ اللهِ.

(We are the face of God.(٢

:And it is mentioned is the Du’a al-nudbah

أَيْنَ وَجْهُ

p: ۹۹۴

.Imam Khumayni, Misbah al-hidayah ila al-khilafah wa al-wilayah, pp. ۲۸-۴۲, ۵۴-۵۶ -۱

.Al-Saduq, Kitab al-tawhid, ۱۵۰ -۲

اللهِ الَّذِى إِلَيْهِ يَتَوَجَّهُ الأَوْلِيَاءُ؟

?Where is the Face of God towards which the friends of God turn

أَيْنَ السَّبَبُ المُتَّصِلُ بَيْنَ الأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ؟

(Where is the link that connects the Earth's people with the Heaven?(١

the highest) ,والمَثَلُ الأعلى And in the Ziyarat al-jami'ah they are referred to as the similitude, or metaphor)." This similitude and the attribute of being the Face is the :same as the image (surah) mentioned in this Noble tradition

إِنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

(Indeed, God created Adam in His image.(٢

That is, Adam is the highest similitude (al-mathal al-a'la) of God, His greatest sign, and the most complete manifestation and mirror of the tajalliyat of the Names and the Attributes, the Face of God (wajh Allah), the Eye of God ('ayn Allah), the Hand of God .((yad Allah) and the side or proximity of God (janb Allah

هُوَ يَسْمَعُ وَيُبْصِرُ وَيَبْطِشُ بِاللهِ؛ وَاللهُ يُبْصِرُ وَيَسْمَعُ وَيَبْطِشُ بِهِ.

(He hears, sees, and holds by God, and God sees, hears and holds by him.(٣

:This wajh Allah is the same 'Light' mentioned in the noble verse

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.)

(God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (٢۴:٣۵

:And Imam Baqir (A) said to Abu Khalid Kabuli in a tradition of the noble Kafi

هُمْ (أَىْ الأَئِمَّهَ) وَاللهِ نُورُ اللهِ الَّذِى أَنْزَلَ، وَهُمْ وَاللهِ نُورُ اللهِ فِى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ.

;They (i.e. the Imams) are, by God, the Light that He has sent down (۶۴:٨; ۶١:٨

(and they, by God, are the Light of God in the heavens and the earth (٢۴:٣۶).(۴ ,(٣٩:۶٩

And the noble Kafi narrates a

۱- Zad al-ma'ad, bab ۱۱, p. ۳۹۹; Mafatih al-janan, ۵۳۷.

۲- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Man la yahduruh al-faqih, ii, ۳۷۰, "bab al-ziyarat al-jami'ah;" 'Uyun akhbar al Rida, bab ۶۸, hadith ۱.

۳- Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab man adha al-muslimin," hadith ۷.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, i, ۱۹۴, "kitab al-hujjah," "bab anna al-a'immah nur Allah," hadith ۱.

tradition of Imam Baqir—may my soul be sacrificed for the dust of his feet that while :expounding the noble verse

(عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ. عَنْ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيمِ.)

(Of what do they question? Of the great tiding? (٧٨:١-٢

,he said

هِىَ فِى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. كَانَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: مَا لِلهِ تَعَالَى آيَةٌ هِىَ أَكْبَرُ مِنِّى وَلا لِلهِ مِنْ نَبَإٍ أَعْظَمُ مِنِّى.

It refers to the Commander of the Faithful ('Ali). And the Commander of the Faithful (A) used to say: "There isn't a greater sign of God than me, and there isn't a greater (tiding of God than me!(١

Hence, the Perfect Man, one of whose instances is Adam, the father of Men, is the greatest sign, manifestation, Name and Attribute of the Real, and he is the metaphor and sign of God, the Exalted. God, the Blessed and the Exalted, is above having a like (mithl) and a peer, but one should not negate the existence of a metaphor for His :sacred Essence, as

(وَلَهُ المَثَلُ الأَعْلَى.)

(And to Him belongs the highest metaphor (mathal).(٢

All the particles of the realm of being are the signs and mirrors of the revelations (tajalliyat) of the Beauty of the Beautiful One, Almighty and Exalted, though each one of them is such only to the extent of it existential capacity. But none of them is the sign of the greatest all-inclusive Name, that is, 'Allah,' except the all-inclusive being (kawn al-jami') and the sacred station of the greatest mediation (maqam al-muqaddas al-barzakhiyyat al-kubra), glorious is his greatness with the Greatness of

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Usul al-Kafi, i, ٢٠٧, "kitab al-hujjah," "bab anna al-ayat al-lati dhakaraha Allahu fi - ١ .kitabih..." hadith ٣

۲- ۲۷:۳۰

his Maker (جَلَّتْ عَظَمَتُهُ بِعَظَمِهِ بَارِيهِ.).

فَاللهُ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ الإنْسَانَ الكَامِلَ وَالآدَمَ الأوَّلَ عَلى صُورَتِهِ الجَامِعَهِ وَجَعَلَهُ مِرْآةَ أسْمائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ. قَالَ الشَّيخُ الكَبيرُ: فَظَهرَ جَميعُ ما فى الصُّورهِ الإلٰهِيَّهِ مِن الأسماءِ فى هٰذِهِ النَّشأهِ الإنسانيَّهِ، فَحازَتْ رُتبَهَ الإحاطَهِ وَالجَمعِ بِهذا الوُجودِ وبِهِ قَامَتِ الحُجَّهُ لِلهِ على المَلائكَهِ.

Hence, God, the Exalted, created the Perfect Man and the First Man in His all-inclusive Image, and He made him the mirror of His Names and Attributes. The Great Shaykh (Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi) has said, "Hence all that which was in the Divine Form of the Names was manifested in this human existent, and so it acquired the station of all-inclusiveness (al-ihatah wa al-jam') with this existence and with it was established God's argument against the angels.':

From this discussion is known the reason for God's choosing and electing the all-inclusive human form from among the various forms of other entities, and the secret of God's giving precedence to Adam (A) over the angels and His giving him a dignity over all other existents and His attributing his spirit to Himself, in the Noble verse:

(وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِى.)

(And I breathed into him (i.e. Adam) of My spirit. (۱۵:۲۹, ۳۸:۷۲)

As our intent in these pages is observance of brevity, we shall refrain from explaining the reality of the Divine breath and its character in Adam, and His singling him out for it from among all the existents. And all Praise belongs to God, firstly and lastly.

وَالحَمْدُ للهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

Thirty-Ninth Hadith: Good And Evil

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى رُكْنِ الإسْلامِ مُحَمَّدِ

بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكَلَيْنِى رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ وَعَلِيِّ بْنِ الحَكَمِ عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ وَهَبٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: إنَّ مِمَّا أَوْحَى اللهُ إلَى مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ وَأَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ فِى التَّوْرَاهِ: إنِّى أنَا اللهُ لا إلَهَ إلاّ أَنَا، خَلَقْتُ الخَلْقَ وَخَلَقْتُ الخَيْرَ وَأَجْرَيْتُهُ عَلَى يَدَىْ مَنْ أُحِبُّ. فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ أَجْرَيْتُهُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ. وَأَنَا اللهُ لا إلَهَ إلاّ أنَا خَلَقْتُ الخَلْقَ وَخَلَقْتُ الشَّرَّ وَأَجْرَيْتُهُ عَلَى يَدَىْ مَنْ أُرِيدُهُ، فَوَيْلٌ لِمَنْ أَجْرَيْتُهُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ.

With my chain of authorities reaching up to the august shaykh, the Pillar of Islam, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from several of our Companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from Ibn Mahbub and Ali ibn al-Hakam, from Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab, who said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say: "Verily, among that which God had revealed to Moses (A) and sent it down to him in the Torah was this passage: Verily I am Allah, and there is no god except I. I originated the creation, and I created everything that is good, bringing it about by the hands of those that I love. So happy is he by whose hands I cause it to happen. And I am Allah, there is no god except I. I created the creation and I created everything that is evil, and I bring it about by the hands of those that I will, so woe to him by whose hand I cause it to happen."(١)

Exposition

As to

p: ٩٩٨

(١) - Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i. ١٥٤, "kitab al-tawhid," "bab al-khayr wa al-sharr," hadith ١.

the word ilah, [whose related derivatives are] alaha (with fathah on the hamzah and lam, meaning 'he worshiped') and ilahatan, it is in the sense of 'abada, 'ibadatan, and ilah, vowelized as fi'al, is in the sense of the object (maf'ul [that is, the object of worship]), like imam, which mean someone who is followed (man yu'tammu bih), ilah is the original root of 'Allah,' and after the addition of alif and lam [i.e. al-making it al-ilah), the hamzah has been deleted for the sake of ease of pronunciation, and some have opined that the alif and lam substitute for the hamzah. Each of these two opinions has grammatical justifications(١) whose mention is not necessary

In the terminology of the Divine sages (ahl Allah, i.e. the urafa), ilahiyyat and uluhiyyat are mostly applied to the station of tajalli at the plane of Act and the station of the Sacred Effusion (fayd al-muqaddas). 'Allah' is the Name of the Glorious One, applied .mostly to the station of the Essence as encompassing all the Attributes

At other times, the usage is reversed. In this noble tradition, it is probable that it is used in its common lexical sense-meaning, 'I am the Worshipped One, and there is no object of worship except Me.' And if this should be what is meant, the limitation of worship either implies that no other being is worthy of worship [besides God], though it should be worshipped mistakenly as a result of the error of men, or that-on

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١ - For the first opinion sec al-Majlisi, Biha'r al-anwar, iv, ١٨٧, "abwab asma'ihi ta'ala wa haqa'iqiha wa sifatiha wa m'aniha," bab ٣. For the second one see al-Tabrisi, Majma' al-bayan , commentary on bismillah al-rahman ar-rahim (from the Surat al-Hamd.)

the basis of the belief of the people of heart and the ‘urafa - worship of every manifestation is the worship of the Absolutely Perfect Being and that man is a seeker :(of absolute beauty in accordance with his God-given fitrat (innate nature

(فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِى فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا.)

(It is) the nature (framed) of Allah in which He hath created man. (٣٠:٣٠)

And this remains true despite man’s alienation from this fitrah and his imagining himself to be attached to finitude and things finite. Or, perhaps, the meaning intended for ilah is the station of Divinity itself, in accordance with the last part of the tradition wherein He attributes good and evil to Himself. On this basis, this would be a reference to Divine Unity at the plane of Act (tawhid al-af’ali), which has been :expressed on the tongue of the great sages by their saying

لا مُؤَثِّرَ فِى الوُجُودِ إَلا اللهُ.

.No one is effective in the realm of existence except God

Further reference to this matter will be made later on, God willing. As to al-khayr, the :authority of the traditionists, Majlisi (M) states in his commentary under this tradition

Good and evil are applied to obedience and disobedience and to their causes and motives, and applied as well to the beneficial creatures, such as grains and fruits and the edible animals, and to the harmful creatures, such as poisons, serpents and scorpions, and to blessings and scourges. The Ash’arites say that all of these are the works of God. The Mu’tazilah and

the Imamiyyah contradict them in relation to the works of men and they have reinterpreted the texts which state that God, the Exalted, is the Creator of good and evil as applying to things other than the deeds of the people."

After that, he says:

As to the philosophers, most of then say "Nothing except God has efficiency in the realm of being (لا مُؤَثِّرَ فِى الوُجُودِ إِلَا اللهُ.), and that the will of the creatures is the preparatory cause for God, the Exalted, to create the deeds at their hands." This is in accordance with the creed of the philosophers and the Ash'arites. And these traditions can also be ascribed possibly to taqiyyah.(١) (Here end his comments, may God elevate his station.)

The Reality Of Good And Evil

The attributes 'good' and 'evil' are applied, in all instances, to perfection and deficiency [respectively] in the essence or attributes of things or to their existence and perfections of existence. All that is essentially good derives from the Reality of Being, and when ascribed to other thugs it is in consideration of their mode of existence. Also, that which is essentially evil (sharr bi al-dhat), derives from non-being ('adam al-wujud) or from the absence of the perfection of existence. Its application to other thugs, such as harmful animals and troublesome insects, is accidental. This, on consideration of all the sides, should be considered as self-evident, though there are also strong arguments in its favor.

Let us rake up the statement [of Majlisi that the position of the Imamiyyah and the Mu'tazilah

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١ - Al-Majlisi, Mir'at al-Uqul, ii, ١٧١-١٧٢, "kitab al-tawhid," "bab al-khayr wa al-sharr," hadith ١.

concerning the creation of the deeds of people being opposed to that of the Ash'arites, and his explaining away the verses and traditions that attribute good and evil to God. As to the said opposition to the Ash'arite viewpoint-who subscribe to a creed based on jabr (compulsion), which is contrary to reason, philosophical proofs and intuition-that is correct. But the verses and traditions do not affirm the creed of the Mu'tazilites, who believe in tafwid (delegation) and their creed is more invalid, .disgraceful, and scandalous than the creed of the Ash'arites

As to the Imamiyyah (R) they have adopted the true creed in the light of the guidance of the great Imams of the Prophet's family and with the blessings of the Household of Revelation and infallibility (A). It is also in agreement with the noble verses and sound metaphysical proofs, in addition to being in consonance with the creed of the illustrious 'urafa-' and the gnosis of the people of the heart. Hence they have no need to do ta'wil of the many traditions and verses which cannot be interpreted in the sense understood by the said traditionist (M). In fact, the Imamiyyah and their Imams do not consider the will of God to be inoperative in any of the deeds of the creatures and they do not consider the matter of any thing as having been delegated .(mufawwad) to the creatures

As to his statement in the latter part of his remarks, that most philosophers believe that "Nothing except God

and that this belief is in (لاـ مُؤَثِّرَ فِی الوُجُودِ إَلاـ اللهُ)".has efficiency in the realm of being consonance with their own creed as well as that of the Ash'arites, [that is partly true and partly false]. As to the statement that the words "Nothing except God has efficiency in the realm of' being" constitute the creed of most of the philosophers and the people of gnosis, that is true. In fact, they say that should any philosopher fail to affirm this matter, it means that the light of wisdom has not entered his Heart and .gnosis has not touched his inner being

But it does not imply that the creature's will is a preparatory cause for the creation of God, as is clear to those who are in the know of the matter. That this statement is consonant with the creed of the Ash'arites is also invalid, and what is more amazing is his putting the Ash'arite creed in the same basket as that of the philosophers! This, despite the great distance that exists between them, and there has rarely been a genuine philosopher who has not opposed the creed of the Ash'arites and considered .it as invalid

As to his statement that these traditions might possibly be ascribed to taqiyyah, firstly there is no justifications for such an ascription, because the literal import of these traditions is in consonance with the true creed and in agreement with metaphysical proof. Secondly, these traditions are in agreement with many of

.the verses of the noble scripture

Therefore, there is no sense in ascribing taqiyyah to the verses and likewise to the traditions that are in consonance with them. Thirdly, these traditions are not contradicted by others so that one might be led by the contradiction to ascribe them to taqiyyah, which is one of the grounds for preferring one group of traditions to another, and they can be reconciled with those which indicate that man is the doer of .good and evil

Fourthly; according to his own statements, these traditions agree with the creed of the Ash'arites which, apparently, was not the prevailing creed in that period, and in such a circumstance there are no grounds for ascribing then to taqiyyah. Fifthly, this topic and the like of it relate to issues of doctrine, which are not subject to the rules of .preference applicable to contradictory traditions (in the area of ahkam), as is evident

As to the word tuba, Jawhiri says, "Tuba, vowelized as fu'la, is derived from tayyib and its ya has been changed to waw due to the dammah on the previous letter (i.e. ta)." According to the Majma', "tuba lahum" means 'there is good (tayyib) life for them.' And it has been said that tuba means summum bonum and the ultimate [object of] desire; and some have said that tuba is the name of a tree in Paradise. It has also been said that tuba also means 'paradise' in the language of the Indians. And tuba laka and

tubaka are used as phrases involving genitive construction (idafah). It is mentioned in a tradition of the Noblest Messenger (S) that "Tuba is a tree in Paradise. Its trunk (asl) is in my house and its branch is the house of 'Ali."(1)

As to the expression "waylun," Jawhari says, "Wayh is an expression of mercy and "wayl" expresses disapproval, and Yazidi states that they have the same meaning. Waylun li zaydin wa wayhun li zaydin can be pronounced with raf on the assumption that wayl and wayh form subjects of a nominative sentence, and also with nasb, on the supposition of an elliptical verb, assuming the underlying form: Alzamahu Allahu al-wayl. And some say that wayl is a valley in hell [so intensely hot] that if a mountain were cast into it will melt due to the intensity of its heat.(2) And some say that it is the name of a pit in hell.(3)

The Relation Of Good And Evil To Creation And The Occurrence Of Evil In The Divine Ordainments (Qada)

It should be known that it has clearly been established in the higher sciences that the order of being possesses the highest degree of perfection and goodness and the ultimate degree of beauty This is demonstrable, summarily, in accordance with one kind of argument that infers the effect from the cause as well in accordance with a detailed exposition, although the knowledge of its detail is exclusive to the Being of its Originator, hallowed be His Names, or available through revelation and Divine teaching.

That which is appropriate for these pages at this stage, as mentioned earlier, is

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١ - Majma al-bayan, commentary on verse ٢٩ of the Sura al-Ra'd. The text of the tradition is as follows: وَرَوَى الحَاكِمُ أَبُو القَاسِمِ الحَسْكَانِيُّ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلامُ قَالَ: سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ عَنْ طُوبَى فَقَالَ: شَجَرَةٌ أَصْلُهَا فِي دَارِي وَفَرْعُهَا عَلَى أَهْلِ الجَنَّهِ. ثُمَّ سُئِلَ عَنْهَا مَرَّةً أُخْرَى فَقَالَ: فِي دَارِ عَلِيٍّ.

٢ - See Majma al-bahrayn and Lisan al-Arab, wide w.y.h.

٣ - The Qamus al-muhit cites this Prophetic tradition under w.y.l إِنَّهُ وَادٍ فِي جَهَنَّمَ يَهْوِى فِيهِ الكَافِرُ

It (i.e. Wayl) is a valley in hell through which the infidel's fall will (أَرْبَعِينَ خَرِيفاً قَبْلَ أنْ يَبْلُغَ قَعْرَهُ.
(.take forty years before he reaches its bottom

that all that which belongs to the categories of perfection, beauty and goodness does not derive except from the Reality of Existence, because there is nothing that has reality except It and, obviously; that which stands in opposition to the Reality of Existence is either note-existence or essence (mahiyyah), which are in themselves nothing and have no value, being sheer vacuity or pure fancy, and basically they have no subsistence until they are illumined with the light of Being or are manifested through its manifestation, neither a subsistence in respect of essence (dhat) nor in .respect of attributes and effects

Each of them (i.e. essences) come to possess manifestation, properties and effects only in the shadow of existence and only when they are touched by the hand of expansive mercy Hence all perfections are rays of the beauty of Absolute Beauty and reflections of the sacred light of the Absolutely Perfect One. Other existents are nothing in themselves, being steer poverty and absolute nothingness. Hence all (perfections derive from Min and belong to Him.(١

Also, it is established in its own place that that which emanates from that Sacred Being is the real substance of being and the sheer content of existence without its being limited by limits pertaining to non-being and essence, because non-being and essence do not derive from the Source of Being and limitation in grace (fayd) derives from the limitations of the receiver of grace. Anyone who understands the character of the effusion and grace as explained

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Al-asfar al-arba'ah, ii, ٢٩٢ff-.see also ibid., i, the discussion on the fundamentality of -١ .(existence (asalat al-wujud

the people of gnosis will affirm that no kind of limitation or restriction is conceivable in .the Divine effusion of grace

Hence in the same way that the Sacred Divine Essence (dhat) is to be considered free from deficiency, contingency; and limitation, so also His Sacred Effusion (fayd al-muqaddas) must be considered to be devoid and free from all limits of contingency; as well as contingent aspects that derive from essence and the limitations that derive from finitude and deficiency. Hence the effusion of His grace, which is the reflection of the Absolutely Beautiful One, is absolute and complete beauty and perfection. Hence He is Beautiful ill His Essence (dhat), Attributes, and Acts, and nothing except that (which is sheer being pertains to His making and creation.(١)

Also it is established ii its own place that all the evils, catastrophes, death, disease and destructive events and troublesome creatures and other such things which are in this world of nature and this narrow pit of darkness arise from the interferences and conflicts between existents, not from the aspects pertaining to Being but on account of the deficiency of their ambiance and the narrowness of their abode. And these derive from limitations and deficiencies which are totally outside the ambit of the light of creation and are in reality below making (ja'l). The true reality is the Light which is quit of all evil, defect and deficiency

However, these defects and evils and harmful and troublesome things, in respect of their defectiveness

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١- Al-asfar al-arba'ah, ii, ٢٩٢, fasl ٢٩-٢٥.

and harmfulness, are not essential objects of creation, but they arc accidental objects of creation in accordance with the metaphysical viewpoint. Because, if the world of nature itself were not to exist and were it not to possess the existential aspects relating to creation [its defects and evils would have been nonexistent] and similarly its benefit and good would not have been realized in it, because they do not belong to the category of absolute non-existence but are relative non-existences which have an accidental existence sub-ordinate to the dispositions [of things]. The proposition that is derived therefrom is a modified proposition (qadiyyah ma'dulah) or an affirmative proposition with a negative predicate (mujibah salibat al-mahmul), not a negative existential proposition (salibah muhasslah).(۱)

In conclusion, that which essentially derives from creation and the Divine making is good and excellence, and the presence of evil, harm, and other things in relation to Divine providence leas the position of something that is subordinate and a by-product. To the first position refers God's statement in the noble verse:

(مَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ حَسَنَهٍ فَمِنْ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَکَ مِنْ سَیِّئَهٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِکَ.)

Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man), it is from Allah, and whatever or ill befalleth thee it is from thyself. (۴: ۷۹)

And the second position is referred to in the noble verse:

(قُلْ کُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.)

Say (O Muhammad): Everything is from God. (۴:۷۸)

And to these two considerations, there are many references in the traditions of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A) including the sacred tradition cited here which

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۱- Al-asfar al-arba'ah, vii, ۵۸-۶۲, safar ۳, muqif ۸, fasl ۲.

.states that good and evil both derive from God's creation

God's Carrying Out Good And Evil Acts At The Hands Of The Servants

Reflection on the points mentioned leads one to understand the character of God's carrying out good and evil acts at the hands of creatures without its leading to the dangers of compulsion (jabr). To investigate this matter in such a way as to make it clear and to remove the doubts requires a detailed study of various theological creeds with its multifarious preliminaries whose mention is not possible in these pages. However, a brief reference, to the extent appropriate for this discussion, is .unavoidable

It should be known that it is not possible for any existent to be independent in any of its actions, unless the agent or the cause can block all the ways to non-existence facing an effect, so that if there were a hundred conditions for an existent to come into being and the cause blocks ninety-nine ways to non-existence facing the effect and one of the conditions remains un fulfilled, it is not possible for the cause to be independent in bringing about its effect. Hence independence in causality depends on the ability of the cause to block all the possible ways to non-being facing the effect so .that it may reach the frontiers of necessity and brought into existence

It is known, on the basis of logical necessity that all beings of the contingent realms, from the beings of the highest jabarut and the highest malakut to the inmates of the world of nature and mulk, with all

their outer and inner powers, lack such a station. For the very first non-being facing an effect is the non-being arising from the absence of the efficient cause, and there is no existent in the realm of being which can overcome the non-being facing the effect in this respect, for that would imply a transformation of that which is contingent by essence into that which is necessary by essence and the departure of the contingent from the limits of the realm of contingency and this is impossible on the basis of .rational self-evidence

Hence it is known that independence in causality requires independence in existence and this is absent among contingents. This explanation reveals that the delegation of creation to any existence in any of the respects pertaining to existence is impossible. This is not limited to those who are religiously responsible for their actions (mukallaf) and their deeds, though such a limitation may be suggested by the usual statements .(of the theologians (mutakallimim

However the generality of the issue at debate can be understood from a variety of topics. But due to the importance of the discussion concerning the acts of the mukallafs the debate is confined to this context in the discussions of the theologians. In any case, the debates of the theologians are of no concern to us and our purpose is to seek and establish the truth, and the impossibility of tafwid to and, of the creatures .in any matter whatsoever is obvious and known

(The Refutation Of Compulsion (Jabr

,The invalidity

of the creed of jabr becomes also known on study. It consists of the belief that none of the ontological intermediaries have a role in the creation of existents although one imagines them to possess such a role. [It means], for instance, that fire has no role in producing heat and it has been a habit of God to create heat following the creation of the form of fire without the form of fire possessing any role in producing heat. Had the habit of God been to create cold following the creation of fire it would not have had a .form different from the present one in which it occurs

In summary, [they claim that] the Sacred Essence is the direct agent of the acts of all mukallafs without the intervention of any intermediate means.(۱) In their own fancy they have adopted this creed for the sake of Hallowing God by negating limitations in respect to Him and so as not to consider His hands as tied. 'Tied be their hands' (۵:۷۰) and cursed be they for this kind of hallowing, which implies deficiency and resemblance to creatures (tashbih) from the viewpoint of metaphysics and the creed .of gnosis

As indicated in the preceding section, God, the Exalted, is absolute perfection and sheer existence, and limits and deficiency arc inconceivable in His Essence and Attributes. That which derives from Divine creation and making is absolute being and the absoluteness of the Sacred Effusion, and it is not possible that a

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۱- Kashfal-murad, ۲۳۹-۲۴۰; Fi 'ilm al-kalam, ii, ۶۲, ۷۸, ۷۹.

deficient and limited existent should emanate from that Sacred Essence. There is no kind of deficiency whatsoever in creation, as imagined by the theologians, and all limitations and deficiencies derive from the deficiency of the receiver of Divine (effusion and the effect, and this stands proved in its own place.(۱

Hence, that which relates directly to the Sacred Essence of God, the Exalted, is absolute being and sheer existence, and that is either the Sacred Effusion according to the way of the gnostics, or the First Immaterial Intellect and the First Noble Light, .according to the creed of the metaphysicians

To explain this in other words, there is no doubt that the existents are different in their receptivity to existence. There are some existents, which receive existence directly and independently; such as substances, for example, and some existents do not receive existence without the existence of something else and without subordination to another existent, such as accidents and things possessing a weak .existence

For instance, the speech of Zayd is something which in order to exist does not receive existence except in subordination [to the existence of Zayd], and accidents and attributes can have no existence without the existence of substances and the objects of which they are attributes, and they cannot exist without them. This deficiency is essential to these existents and their existential inadequacy; it is not due to deficiency in the agency and creativity of God, Exalted is His station. Hence it is known that jabr and negation

p: ۱۰۱۲

Al-Asfar al-arba'ah, ii, ۱۲۷ff., safar ۲, maqalah ۶, the discussion on cause and effect -۱ .('illat wa ma'lul), fasl ۲, ۱۳, ۱۴, ۲۵, ۲۶, ۲۶, ۲۹. See also vi, ۳۲۰ ff, safar ۳, muqif ۴, fasl ۳

.of existential intermediaries in the realm of being are impossible

Among firm arguments pertaining to this topic is that the essences (mahiyyat) are in themselves devoid of the capacity to produce or receive efficiency, and creation does nor relate to them by essence (bil-dhat), as it is the Reality of Being which is the source of efficiency by essence and the negation of efficiency in relation to It implies that a thing should not be what it is. Hence, the creation of the planes of existence devoid of efficiency and effect is absolutely impossible and implies the negation of a .thing's identity with itself

In conclusion, it is known that both tafwid and jabr are invalid and impossible on the basis of metaphysical reasoning and rational criteria. 'The creed of the middle position' (amr bayn al-amrayn) is one which is affirmed by the way of the people of gnosis as well as by transcendental philosophy. However, there is a great divergence .of opinion among the ulama (R) concerning its meaning

That which is the soundest of views and most secure from controversy and more in consonance with the religion of tawhid is the creed of the illustrious gnostics and the people of the heart. However, this creed, on every topic pertaining to the Divine teachings, stands in the category of 'simple and impossible' (sahl wa mumtani) whose understanding is not possible through metaphysical argument and study and is .unattainable without complete piety of the heart as well as Divine succor

Accordingly, we shall

leave it for those who are worthy of it, that is, the awliya' of God, and enter this valley through the road of the pursuers of rational thought. And that is to reject both tafwid-which means the independence of existents in efficiency-and jabr-which is the negation of their efficiency-and to affirm the middle position (manzilah bayn al-manzilatyn), which consists of affirming their efficiency and negating their independence and asserting that the position of the creation is like Being and the .attributes of Being

In the same way that the existents exist, without being independent in their existence, and have attributes, which are posited of them without their being independent, they have actions. and effects which are posited of them and which emanate from them but they are not independent in their existence and they arc agents and creative causes that are non-independent in their efficiency and creativity

And it should be known-as reflection on points mentioned in the preceding section will revealed-that good and evil are attributable both to God and the creatures and that both these attributions are correct, and it is for the same reason that it has been stated in this tradition that it is God who brigs about good and evil through the hands of His servants. Nevertheless, all that is good is relates to Good essentially (bi al-dhat) while its relation to the servants and the creatures is accidental (bi al-'arad.) The evils, on the contrary; arc related to other existents essentially and their relation to

God, the Exalted, is accidental. And to this matter refers the hadith qudsi which .declares

O son of Adam! I am more worthy of your virtues than yourself and you are more (worthy of your vices than Me.(١

Reference was made to this tradition earlier and here we will refrain from repeating .that which has already been mentioned

وَالحَمْدُ لِلهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

.And Praise is God's, in the beginning and the end

Fortieth Hadith: Exegesis of Surat Al-Tawhid and Some Verses of Surat Al-Hadid

point

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الأَقْدَمِ وَالرُّكْنِ الأَعْظَمِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِي رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنِ الحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنِ النَّضْرِ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ عَنْ عَاصِمِ بْنِ حَمِيدٍ قَالَ: سُئِلَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَنِ التَّوْحِيدِ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلِمَ أَنَّهُ يَكُونُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ أَقْوَامٌ مُتَعَمِّقُونَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللهُ تَعَالَى: (قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ أَحَدٌ.) وَالآيَاتِ مِنْ سُورَةِ الحَدِيدِ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ: (وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ.) فَمَنْ رَامَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ هَلَكَ.

With my chain of authorities reaching up to the foremost shaykh and the greatest pillar, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn Tahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from al-Husayn ibn Said, from al-Nadr ibn Suwayd, from 'Asim ibn Humayd who said: Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) was asked concerning tawhid. He replied, "Verily, God Almighty and Glorious, knew that in the ultimate era there would be people of profound thinking, and so God, the Exalted, sent down, Qul huwa Allahu ahad (Say: He is Allah, the One...) and the verses of Surat al-Hadid until His words, '... and He knows well that which is

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١ - Al-Jawahir al-saniyyah, p. ٢٧٩. The text of the tradition is as follows: عَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ... قَالَ اللهُ: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، أَنَا أَوْلَى بِحَسَنَاتِكَ مِنْكَ وَأَنْتَ أَوْلَى بِسَيِّئَاتِكَ مِنِّى. From al-Rida (A)... He said, "God said: O son of Adam! I am more worthy of your virtues than yourself and you are

”.more worthy of your vices than Me

(in the breasts.' Hence someone who seeks to go beyond that will perish."(۱)

Exposition

Hadrat Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Q) says, "Asim ibn Humayd was not a contemporary of Imam Sajjad and therefore the tradition is a marfu' one."(۲) The repetition of the word qala (he said) is perhaps due to a fragmentation in the hadith, or, perhaps, it is an error of the copyists, or the subject (fa'il) was mentioned but was omitted due to a lapse of the pen. Or the fail has been omitted, the case being one where such omission is permissible. Or the first fail is the pronoun referring to al-Nadr ibn Suwayd, .and this possibility is very remote

As to al-tawhid, tawhid pertains to the form tafil, and that is either due to repetition signified by the verb, in the sense of extreme emphasis on unity and simplicity, or it is in the sense of qualification of the object (maful) on the basis of the verb, such as in takfir and tafsiq. One of the scholars has held that the form tafil is not used in the sense of qualification of the object (maful) and that it is also wrong to impart such a sense to takfir and tafsiq, because they rather mean calling someone to fisq and kufr, and that [in the sense of qualifying the object] ikfar should be used instead of takfir. Hence, the Qamus, too, under the entry on k.f.r, does not mention takfir in the sense .of attribution of kufr

This author says: Although

۱- Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, i, ۹۳, "kitab al-tawhid" "bab al-niyyah" hadith ۳.

۲- Sharh Usul al-Kafi, p. ۲۴۶, "kitab al-tawhid" "bab al-niyyah" hadith ۳.

I too have not seen in the Qamus that takfir means attribution of kufr, and even Jawhari, the most erudite of the lexicographers, has not mentioned this sense for takfir and, in consonance with the statement of the above-mentioned scholar, has considered ikfar to be the proper word for this sense, but the books on grammar have considered one of the meanings of the form taf'il as qualification of the object (maful) with the quality implied in the verb, and they have cited tafsiq as an example. In any case, the meaning of tawhid is attribution of unity (wahdaniyyah).

As to the word mut'ammiqun, 'amq and 'umq (with fathah or dammah on the 'ayn) means the bottom of a well and a pit. For the same reason mathematicians use the term 'umq (height) in the sense of the third dimension of bodies which begins at its top surface and ends at the bottom surface, in the same way that they use length as the first dimension and breadth as the second. Also for the same reason a person possessing a piercing vision is called muta'ammiq and a perspicacious vision is called 'amiq (deep) and a vision that does not have depth is called superficial (sathi). It is as if matters pertaining to knowledge have a depth and a bottom and the muta'ammiq person is one who goes to their depth ('umq) from where he draws out the truths, and someone with a superficial vision remains at the surface and fails to

.fathom the depth of any matter

As to the expression, fa man rama-rama and yarumu are in the sense of seeking, and .maram is that which is sought

As to the expression wara'a dhalika, wara' is in the sense of 'behind' (khlaf), and at times, it is used in the sense of 'in front of (quddam). Hence it has contrary meanings .and its use in the first sense is appropriate to cases such as the present one

A Hint Concerning The Exegesis Of Surat Al-Tawhid

It should be known that tafsir (exegesis) of this blessed Sarah and that of the beginning verses of Surat al-Hadid is beyond the capacity of the likes of us, and, in fact, outside the scope of the present discourse. To be just, how could it be permissible for the likes of me to embark upon the exegesis of something which God, the Exalted, has sent down for persons of profound thinking and for the veritable 'ulama? And Hadrat Baqir al-'Ulum (A) (as mentioned in al-Tafsir al-burhan) after divulging some of the secrets relating to the letters of the blessed word 'al-samad,' said, "Had I found anyone who could bear the knowledge that God has bestowed upon me, I would have propagated tawhid, islam, iman, din and sharayi ' through al-(samad."(١)

The great philosopher Sadr al-Muta'allihin says concerning the verses of Surat al-Tawhid, "You should know that each of these six verses referred to in the hadith constitutes a great door to the knowledge of tawhid and Divinity, and comprises a well-established matter from among the principles

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١- See al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. ۴, p. ۵۲۶. The Arabic text of the tradition is as follows: ثُمَّ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: لَوْ وَجَدْتُ لِعِلْمِيَ الَّذِى آتَانِيَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَمَلَةً لَنَشَرْتُ التَّوْحِيدَ وَالإِسْلامَ وَالإِيمَانَ وَالدِّينَ وَالشَّرَائِعَ مِنَ الصَّمَدِ...

.(of samadiyyat and rububiyyat (lordship

And were time to provide opportunity and assistance to a divine gnostic or sage that has acquired his knowledge from the niche of Muhammadan prophethood (S) and who has derived his wisdom from the traditions of the Household of Infallibility and Purity (A) truly, it would befit him, and these verses, to fill a big volume, or several of (them, with exegesis of each of them."(١

In any case, the likes of this authors are not champions of this field, but as it is not reasonable to abandon what is feasible for the infeasible, we shall briefly mention some hints out of what we have learned from our great teachers, from the books of the people of gnosis, and from the radiant niche of guidance of the Household of .Infallibility, and all guidance comes from God

A Hint Concerning Bismillah

It should be known that in accordance with the view of the people of gnosis, the bismillah ('in Name of Allah') in every surah pertains to that surah itself and not to "I seek help" or anything of the kind, because ismullah (Name of Allah) is the totality of the mashiyyah (Divine will) at the plane of manifestation (maqdam al-zuhuri), the station of the Most Sacred Effusion (fayd al-aqdas) at the plane of revelation (tajalli) of ahadiyyah, the station of inclusiveness of Divine Names (jam' al-ahadi ye asma') at the plane of wahidiyyah, and the entire cosmos (kawn) at the plane of inclusive unity (ahadiyyat-a jam'), which is the inclusive

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.Sharh Usul al-Kafi, p. ٢۴٨ -١

cosmic object (kawn al-jami) and the levels of existence in the vertical ascending and descending order and each of the objective entities (huwiyyat al-'ayniyyah) at the .horizontal plane

The meaning of 'Allah' differs in accordance with each of these considerations, for it is the referent of those Names, and the meaning of bismillah varies in accordance with each surah of the Noble Qur'an with which the bismillah is associated in respect of text and which is manifestation of it in respect of meaning. Rather, the meaning of bismillah varies in accordance with every action that is begun with bismillah and it .relates to that very action

One who has gnosis of the manifestations of Divine Names observes that all works and actions and all objects and accidents are manifested and realized by virtue of the sacred Greatest Name (ism al-azam) and the station of absolute will (mashiyyat al-mutlaqah). Hence while performing that action and bringing it into existence he recalls this matter in his heart and extends it to the plane of the natural realm and mulk "!pertaining to himself and says, "Bismillah

That means, I eat or I drink, or I write and I do such and such a thing by the station of the absolute will of the Possessor of the station of All-encompassing beneficence (rahmaniyyat), which is the expanse of existence, and the station of All-mercifulness (rahimiyyat), which is the expanse of the station of perfection of existence, or the Possessor of the station of All-encompassing beneficence, which

is the station of revelation (tajalli) through exoteric manifestation (tajalli bi zuhur) and expansion of existence (bast al-wujud), and the station of All-mercifulness, which is the station of revelation through esoteric manifestation (tajalli bi batiniyyat) and .(contraction of existence (qabd al-wujud

Hence, from one viewpoint, the Godward wayfarer and the gnostic of God sees all actions and existents as manifestations of the absolute will and as annihilated in it. The aspect of unity predominates in this view and he considers bismillah in all the surahs of the Qur'an and in all actions and works to possess a single sense. And from another viewpoint which is turned towards the world of separation and differentiation he sees a different meaning in bismillah at the head of every surah and at the .beginning of every action

At this stage where we presently are, which is that of exegesis of the noble surah of Tawhid, we may take its bismillah as relating to the noble word 'qul' (Say!), in which case the meaning of bismillah in the garb of singularity (tajrid) and under the predominance of tawhid will be the station of absolute will, and in the garb of multiplicity and at the station of attention to pluralities it will be its determinations (ta'ayyunat). And at the station of the togetherness of the two stations, which is the station of greatest barzakh (maqam al-barzakhiyyat al-kubra), it will mean the will at the station of unity alongside plurality and the exoteric aspect (zuhur) alongside the esoteric one

.butun), and rahmaniyyat and rahimiyyat in the second sense)

And as in the noble verse Qul huwa ‘llahu ahad, in which ahadiyyat al-ghaybiyyah (the transcendent unity) and uluhiyyat al-asma’iyyah (Divinity at the, plane of the Names) merge together, that which is meant is the Name Allah in accordance with the third station, that is, the station of barzakhiyyat. Hence from the transcendent (ghaybi) station of ahadiyyat the address goes forth to the pious and immaculate, the ahadi and ahmadi heart of Muhammad that, “Say in accordance with this realm of the greatest barzakh through manifestation of the Name Allah, which is the station of absolute will and the possessor of the manifestation and determination of ”.rahmaniyyat along with rahimiyyat, and expansion along with contraction

The noble word huwa refers to the station of absolute Divine ipseity (huwiyyat al-mutlaqah) as such, without its being determined by Attributes and without revelation through Names, even the Names of Essence which are considered at the plane of ahadiyyat. And this reference is not possible except by the possessor of that heart and station, and had he not been assigned to divulge this relation to Haqq he would not have ever uttered this noble word. However, it was an irresistible Divine .ordainment that the Seal of Prophesy (S) should disclose this reference

And as he did not remain in the embrace of absoluteness and possessed the station of barzakhiyyat, he said, “Allahu ahad.” And Allah is the greatest all-inclusive Name and the absolute and ultimate Lord, and

from the barzakhi viewpoint of multiplicity of Names manifested at the plane of wahidiyyah, it is the same as the transcendent and ghaybi revelation (tajalli) at the station of ahadiyyat. Neither the aspect of ahadiyyat is predominant over the aspect .of wahidiyyat in the heart of such a wayfarer nor wahidiyyat over ahadiyyat

The occurrence of Allah before ahad-despite that the Names of Essence have precedence in respect of conception-is perhaps a reference to the station of revelation to the wayfarer's heart, for the revelations of Essence in the hearts of the awliya' are first through revelation of- attributive Names (asma' sifatiyyah) at the .plane of wahidiyyah and later on through ahadi Names of Essence

And the mention of Allah and singling it out from among the Names-despite that in accordance with the character of wayfaring and the order of revelation, the revelation first occurs, in accordance with the state of the wayfarer's heart, through the manifestations of the Name Allah, which comprises the other Names, and only then, at the conclusion of wayfaring in the attributive Names, does occur the revelation through the Name Allah-that is for one of two reasons: either it indicates that revelation through any Name is revelation through the Name Allah, in accordance with the unity of manifestations and that which they manifest, especially at the plane of Divinity, or it indicates the destination of wahidi wayfaring, and unless it is realized .the wayfarer does not set out on ahadi wayfaring

Also, on the basis of this

exposition, huwa (He) refers to the station which transcends all reference and lies beyond the aspirations of gnostics, and beyond all names and descriptions and above revelation and manifestation. Ahad refers to revelation through esoteric Hidden Names (asma' al-batiniyyah-ye ghaybiyyah) and Allah refers to revelation through exoteric Names, and through these three all the primary conceptions of Lordship are .obtained

The other four Names, which are included in samadiyyat, are, in accordance with some traditions(۱) negative Names of tanzih (negation of similarity to creatures) which are conceived in subordination to the positive Names of Divine beauty (asma' .al-thubutiyyah ye jamaliyyah) as was pointed out earlier under one of the traditions

That which has been said until this point applies in case bismillah is taken to relate to the noble word qul, and yet it may be related to each of the parts of this noble surah. In accordance with each of these possibilities the exegesis of the surah and its bismillah will be different, and as their discussion will cause prolixity we will abstain .from it

Our shaykh, the perfect gnostic Shahabadi, may my soul be his ransom, would say, "Huwa refers to six other Names and perfections which are mentioned in the blessed surah of Tawhid after this blessed word, because as the sacred Essence is the absolute huwa, which refers to sheer existence, it encompasses all the perfections of .the Names (kamalat asma'iyyah); hence It is Allah

And since sheer existence with its simple reality possesses all Attributes and

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Kitab al-tawhid, p. ۹۱, bab ۴, hadith ۳; al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. ۴, p. ۵۲۵, from Imam Baqir (A): فَقَالَ: (اللهُ أَحَدٌ اللهُ الصَّمَدُ.) ثُمَّ فَسَّرَهُ فَقَالَ: (لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ.)

Names and this plurality of Names does not compromise the unity of the sacred Essence, It is ahad. And as sheer existence has no essence (mahiyyah) It is samad. And since sheerness is without deficiency, and is not derived from any other, and as repetition is impossible for it, it is neither begetter (walid) nor begotten (mawlud) and ".(has no match (kufu

It should be known that in the sacred traditions there are mentioned many meanings and subtle points concerning samad whose discussion is beyond the scope of these pages and requires a separate treatise. Here we will mention only one point which is that if samad should refer to essence itself, in accordance with some considerations, the meaning of Allah in Allah us-samad will pertain to the station of wahidiyyat and the station of inclusive unity of Names (ahadiyyat al-jami' asma'). And should it refer to a relative attribute, as inferred from certain traditions, it would refer to the inclusive unity of Names at the plane of revelation through the sacred effusion and its ".meaning would be consonant with "Allah is the Light of the heavens

A Brief Hint Concerning the Exegesis of the Noble Verses of Surat Al-Hadid Until The Words 'Alimun Bi Dhatis-Sudur

As to the first verse,(١) it implies the tasbih of all existents, even plants and 'inanimate' objects (jamadat). Its limitation to intelligent beings [as suggested by some scholars] is due to the veiled intellects of the intelligent. And should this noble verse be capable of reinterpretation (ta'wil), other noble verses cannot be interpreted in this manner, :such as the statement of God, the Exalted

(أَلَمْ تَرَ

١- The Verse is: (سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِی السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِیزُ الْحَکِیمُ.) Any that which is in the heavens (and the earth does the tasbih of God, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.(٥٧: ١

أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَابُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْ النَّاسِ.)

Hast thou not seen how to God bow all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth, the sun and the moon, the stars and the mountains, the trees and the beasts, (and many of mankind? (۲۲:۱۸

Also, the interpretation of the tasbih as something innate (fitri) and inbuilt (takwini) is an inane one, not consonant with the traditions and Qur'anic verses besides being contrary to firm metaphysical proof and the gnostic approach. That which is strange is that the great philosopher and scholar Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Q) does not consider tasbih in these creatures to constitute speech. He considers the "speech" of some 'inanimate' objects such as the pebbles to be sounds created in them, in accordance .with their states, by the holy spirit of the wali

He has considered the statements of some gnostics who consider all existents as possessing linguistic life (hayat nutqi) as being contrary to metaphysical reasoning and as implying suspension of their nature (ta'til) and perpetuation of compulsion (dawam al-qasr),(۱) although such a position is contrary to his own principles. However, this position, which is borne out by explicit Qur'anic verses and is the essence of gnosis, does not lead to any inconsistency at all, and were it not for the fear of prolixity we would have elaborated on this matter along with its necessary preliminaries. However, here we shall confine ourselves to a

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.Sharh Usul al-Kafi, p. ۲۴۸, "kitab al-tawhid" "bab al-niyyah" hadith ۳ -۱

.passing hint

It was indicted earlier also that the reality of existence is identical with consciousness, knowledge, will, power, life and other aspects of life, so much so that if any thing were not to possess knowledge and life, it would not have existence. And anyone who apprehends, with a gnostic understanding, the meaning of the fundamentality of existence and its being univocal, will, on the basis of gnosis or knowledge, affirm the life that pervades all existents along with all the other aspects of life such as consciousness, will, speech, etc. Were one to possess the station of vision of reality, acquired through spiritual austerities, one would directly witness the chorus of the .tasbih and taqdis of all existents

Now the stupor caused by nature has dimmed our sight, dulled our hearing, and all other senses, not allowing us to be aware of the realities of existence and objective entities, in the same way that there are curtains of darkness and light that separate us from God, and curtains that conceal other existents from us, and even our own .souls, concealing their life, consciousness and other aspects from our sight

But the most impenetrable of all curtains is the curtain of denial arising from confined thoughts, which keep man from attaining to anything. The best thing for the likes of us, who are kept from vision by surrounding veils, is to submit to and to affirm the signs and traditions of God's awliya' and to refrain from interpretations based on

subjective opinion and from efforts to reconcile them with Judgments of feeble .intellects

If supposedly it were possible to interpret the verses pertaining to the tasbih of :existents as something inbuilt or innate, what are we to do with the noble verse

(قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ.)

An Ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his troops should trample (upon you without knowing? (٢٧:١٨

And what are we to do with the traditions that have been narrated on various topics from the Household of Purity and Infallibility, which are by no means amenable to ?such interpretations

Accordingly, the pervasion of all things with life and tasbih based on consciousness and knowledge must be regarded as one of the necessary principles of higher philosophy and as one of definite principles of the teachers of religion and gnosis. However, the character of the tasbih of every existent and the particular dhikr pertaining to it, and that man is the possessor of all-inclusive tasbih and that other existents have dhikr consonant with their own mode of existence-an overall view of that is based on a scientific and gnostic criterion relating to the science of the Names, and its details pertain to the sciences deriving from direct witness of reality that are .'exclusive to the perfect awliya

As mentioned in the previous section, the bismillah of every surah relates to that very surah and here too it relates to sabbaha lillah. From it one may infer the creed

of the orthodox sect concerning the problem of jabr and tafwid, for it refers, in a subtle manner, as is ultimately revealed by the mystical experience of the gnostics, to each of the two relations, that is, the relation to ismullah (Name of Allah), which is the station of the Divine will pertaining to Act (mashiyyah fi'liyyah), along with the relation .to things existent in the heavens and the earth

The Divine will has been given precedence [to the reference to creation] in order to underline the sustaining role of God and to give precedence to the Godward aspect over the aspect relating to the creation. And were it not for the fear of prolixity we would have described the reality of the tasbih and its implication of tahmid, and that every tasbih and tahmid by everyone refers to God, and we would have also explained the meaning of tasbih and tahmid for ismullah and by ismullah, the reason for the special mention of the two blessed Names al-'aziz (Almighty) and al-Hakim (All-wise) and their relation to 'Allah,' the difference between the 'Allah' mentioned in the bismillah and the 'Allah' mentioned in the noble verse sabbaha lillah, and given the explanation of 'heavens' and 'earth' and that which is in the heavens and the earth, in accordance with different viewpoints of the gnostics and the philosophers, as well as discussed the huwa in this blessed verse and the difference between it and the huwa in the noble verse Qul huwa

llahu ahad in accordance with the sweet approach of 'irfan. However, in these pages' .we have to confine ourselves to, a passing hint

As to the second noble verse,(١) it refers to the ownership of God, the Glorious, in relation to the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth. Subordinate to this ownership (malikiyyat), all-inclusive sovereignty, power and control take place the giving of life and causing of death, manifestation and return, expansion and contraction. In this view, all regulations and plans are annihilated in the regulation and planning of God, which is ultimate tawhid on the plane of Act (tawhid al-fi'li), and therefore the giving of life and making to die-which are either one of the major manifestation of malakuti dispositions or refer to the totality of expansion and contraction-have been related to .the ownership of the sacred Essence itself

Although the giving of life is one of the aspects of rahmaniyyat and making to die one of the aspects of ownership, both of them have been related to Divine ownership, and this may be on the basis of a major gnostic principle according to which every Name includes all the Names in their ahadi and ghaybi aspect, and this point cannot be elaborated here. The beginning and the following parts of the verse may be a reference to unity in plurality and plurality in unity at the station of revelation (tajalli) through the sacred effusion (fayd al-muqaddas), as is clear for those who are familiar .with these principles

The pronoun

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١ - The Verse is: (لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.) To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and makes to die and He is .powerful over all things

in lahu (to him belong), apparently, may refer to Allah and it may as well refer to ‘aziz and Hakim, and the meaning of the noble verse will be different in each case, as .reflection will show to those who are familiar with these principles

Issues such as the explanation of the character of Divine ownership, the reason for the imperfect tense of the verbs yuhit (gives life) and yumitu (causes to die), which indicates continuity and repetition, the referent of the pronoun huwa, and the different meanings that follow as a result of the different referents, explanation of whether muhyi, mumit and qadir are Names of Essence or those of Attributes or Acts- these issues have to be consigned to their proper occasion and place, like the explanation of the character of giving life and causing death, the reality of the trumpet of Israfil and the two soundings pertaining to bringing to life and causing death, the functions of Hadrat Israil and Hadrat Azra’il and their stations and the character of their causing life and death, each of which has quite elaborate gnostic .descriptions and metaphysical proofs

:As to the third noble verse- it is as follows

(هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.)

He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward, and He is the Knower of (all things. (۵۷:۳

One who has knowledge of the true teachings the people of ma’rifah and conviction and is a wayfarer of the way of the people of the heart

and wayfaring knows that the ultimate goal of the wayfaring of wayfarers and the ultimate aspiration of the gnostics is understanding of this clear noble verse. By the Life of the Beloved! there is no better statement of the reality of tawhid of the Essence and the Names than this verse, and it would be fitting for all the gnostics to fall to the ground and to bow down before this consummate gnosis of Muhammad (S) .this inclusive comprehension of Ahmad, and this firm Divine sign

By the reality of gnosis and love! when the gnostic lost in Divine splendor and the lover lost in the beauty of die Beloved hears this noble verse, he is overcome by such a celestial ecstasy and a Divine delight that is inexpressible in any language and .unbearable by any creature

فَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ، مَا أَعْظَمَ شَأْنَهُ وَأَجَلَّ سُلْطَانَهُ وَأَكْرَمَ قَدْرَهُ وَأَمْنَعَ عِزَّهُ وَأَعَزَّ جَنابَهُ.

So glory be to God, how lofty is His station, how splendid is His sovereignty, how great !is His worth, how inaccessible His majesty and how lofty His threshold

Those who find fault with the statements of the august ‘urafa and the knowers of God and the awliya’ of the All-Beneficent would do well to see if any Divine gnostic and wayfarer has said anything more than that which is contained in this noble verse or if anyone has introduced any new ware into the marketplace of Divine teachings. Here is this noble Divine verse and there are the books of the urafa

.brimming with ‘irfan to see and judge

Although the blessed Surat al-Hadid and especially its first noble verses contain teachings which are beyond the reach of aspirers, but it is the belief of this author that there is a special quality in this noble verse that is absent in other verses. The priority (awwaliyyat) and posteriority (akhiriyyat) of al-Haqq and His zahiriyyat and batiniyyat are things which are beyond speech and writing. So let us pass on and leave them for .’the hearts of the lovers and the awliya

As for the fourth noble verse,(١) it refers to the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days and the istiwa (lit. sitting) on the Throne (‘arsh). The intellects are bewildered in the exegesis of this noble verse and everyone has interpreted it in accordance with his approach in the sciences and gnosis. The literalists among scholars state that that which is meant by creation in six days is that the period of .creation if measured would equal six [ordinary] days

The great philosopher Sadr al-Muta’allihin (Q) has considered them as implying the Divine days, each of which equals a thousand years, thus making the six days correspond to the period from the descent of Adam until the rise of the Muhammadan sun, which is six thousand years. He considers the beginning of the daybreak of Friday (yawm al jumu’ah) and the day of gathering (yawm al jam), as the seventh day and the beginning of the day of Resurrection

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١- The Verse is: (هُوَ الَّذِی خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِی سِتَّةِ أَیَّام ثُمَّ اسْتَوَی عَلَی الْعَرْشِ یَعْلَمُ مَا یَلِجُ فِی الْأَرْضِ وَمَا یَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا یَنْزِلُ مِنْ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا یَعْرُجُ فِیهَا وَهُوَ مَعَکُمْ أَیْنَ مَا کُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِیرٌ.) He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days then sat on the throne. He knows that which penetrates into the earth and that which emerges from it, and that which descends from the heaven and that which ascends into it, and He is with you wherever you may (be, and God sees what you do. (۵۷:۴

and the beginning of the istawa of the All-Beneficent on the Throne. He has mentioned it briefly in Sharh Usul al-Kafi and elaborately in his exegesis.(۱) Some gnostics have interpreted the six days as stages in the journey of the light of the sun of existence in the mirror of descent and ascent.

According to the creed of gnosis, the descending levels of existence until the lowest point-which is the plane of concealment of the sun of existence by curtains of finitude and differentiation (ta'ayyunat)--constitute the reality of the night of ordainment (laylat al-qadr) and the beginning of the day of resurrection is from the first stage of return of mulk to malakut and removal of the curtains of ta'ayyunat to the ultimate levels of manifestation and return, which is the complete appearance of the greatest resurrection (qiyamat al-kubra).

The six days in which the creation of the heavens and the earth was completed, culminating in the Throne of God, the Throne of the all-Beneficent, which is the ultimate end of Divine istawa, power, and dominance, are the sixfold ascending planes in the greater cosmos ('alam al-kabir); and the Throne of God, which is the manifestation of the perfect dominance and ownership, is the plane of will and the all-beneficent sacred effusion (fayd al-muqaddas al-rahmani), which is its complete manifestation after elimination of the ta'ayyunat and completion of the creation of the heavens and the earths.

And until the existence of the heavens and the earth endures, their creation is not

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۱- Sharh Usul al-Kafi, p. ۲۴۹-۲۵۰; Sadr al-Muta'allihin, Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. ۶, pp. ۱۶۰-۱۶۴, exegesis of Surat al- Hadid.

finished from the viewpoint of the people of gnosis, in accordance with the words "Everyday He is engaged in some work" (۵۵:۲۹) and as implied by the absence of repetition in revelation (tajalli). In the Greater Man (insan al-kabir) and the greater cosmos the sixfold planes and their seventh subtlety (latifah) is the Throne of the All-Beneficent, which is the plane of the real heart, and were it not for the fear of prolixity, we would have explained thoroughly the greater plausibility of this interpretation in comparison to other interpretations, although the knowledge of the Divine scripture is with God, the Exalted, and those who are its special addressees. We speak on the basis of probabilities and plausibilities following the infeasibility of .the literal sense

At this place there is another probability which is not contrary to this mystical description, and that is in accordance with present-day astronomy which has replaced Ptolemaic astronomy Apart from our solar system there are other innumerable planetary systems in accordance with the details given by books on contemporary astronomy That which is meant by heavens and earth may be the present solar system along with its planets and their orbits and the description of its duration as six days may be in accordance with another planetary system. This probability is closer to the literal sense than others, while it does not contradict the gnostic interpretation, because it is in accordance with one of the esoteric meanings .of the Qur'an

,The following part of the noble verse

in His words, “He knows what penetrates into the earth, (and what comes forth from it, what comes down from heaven, and what goes up unto it.)” refers to God’s knowledge of the particular details of the planes of existence through the hierarchies of the Hidden and the manifest (ghayb wa shuhud), the ascent and the descent. And in His words, “He is with you (wherever you are; and God sees the things you do), there is a reference to the sustaining contiguity of God (ma’iyyat al-qayyumiyyah ye haqq) and the character of God’s knowledge of particulars through existential encompassment and universal sustainment. None except the elect from among the .awliya’ of God can perceive the reality of this Divine sustainment

As to the fifth noble verse,(۱) it refers to the ownership of God and the return of the entire realm of existence to God and indicates that this is related to the Name malik (Owner, Master), as mentioned in the phrase of the blessed Surat al-Hamd: the Master of the Day of Judgment (maliki yawmi’d-din), and the exegesis and .elaboration of each of these matters should be left to another occasion and place

As to the sixth verse,(۲) it refers to the alternation of day and night and that each of them waxes as the other vanes and vice versa. In this alternation there are many benefits whose mention is beyond the scope of our discussion and there is another gnostic interpretation for the noble verse which we shall refrain from

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۱- The Verse is: (لَهُ مُلْکُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ.) To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and to God return all affairs. (۵۷:۵)

۲- The Verse is: (يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِى النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِى اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ.) He makes the night enter the day and He makes the day enter the night and He knows that which is in the breasts. (۵۷:۶)

.mentioning

Conclusion

That which is stated in the closing part of the noble tradition, that "whoever seeks to go beyond that will perish," it indicates that the teachings which have been mentioned in these noble verses and the blessed Surat al-Tawhid constitute the limits of human knowledge and the ultimate frontier of gnosis, and should someone imagine that there is anything beyond that he is in error. And as these verses impart the highest teachings to mankind, their negligence also leads to destruction and perdition and .ignorance of the station of the Lord

Of course, this noble tradition is meant to encourage and inspire profound thought on these noble verses. But every science is for its people and every field has its own champions. One should not imagine that one can understand the verses of tawhid-whether those of the blessed Surat al-Tawhid or the present noble verses or other verses of the Qur'an and similarly the noble traditions, sermons, supplications and prayers of the Imams (A) all of which are replete with higher teachings-with the aid of .one's ideas and on the basis of common-place literal meanings

That is an immature notion and a satanic insinuation and a trap set by that highwayman of the road of humanity to stop man from attaining to the higher teachings and to bar him from the doors of wisdom and ma'rifah and to cast him into the valley of error and confusion. God is witness-and His witness is sufficient(۱) -that I do not intend to promote the

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۱- A reference to ۴:۷۹.

market of formal philosophy or formal ‘irfan; rather, my purpose is that my brethren in faith, especially the learned amongst them, should pay some attention to the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) and those of the Qur’an and not neglect them, for the main purpose of the missions of the apostles and the revelation of the scriptures has been the noble goal of gnosis of God, in the shadow of which all felicities of the world and the Hereafter are realized.

But alas! So long as man is in this world and besieged by all kinds of veils he cannot identify the path of his own felicity. No matter how much the prophets, the saints and the scholars may exhort him, he does not awake from the slumber of neglect and does not remove the stoppers of neglect from his ears. He awakes from the sleep of neglect when he has lost the very means of acquiring felicity and when there remains nothing for him except regret and shame.

Prayer and Epilogue

O God, Who have illuminated the hearts of the awliya’ with the light of love and cleared the tongues of the lovers of Thy beauty from the taints of egoism, and have placed Thy majesty beyond the reach of self-seeking wretches!

Awaken us from the intoxication of worldly delusion and deliver us from the heavy slumber of nature, and remove with ‘My gesture the thick curtains and obstructing veils of egotism and self-seeking. Let us into the assembly of

the holy ones of Thy threshold and into the holy company of the sincere God-seekers. Remove from us these devilish, ugly, and coarse qualities of ours and our pretensions and waywardness. Inform with sincerity and love our movements and pauses, our actions and works, our beginning and end, and our outward and inward being.

O God! Your blessings are given without prior deservedness (Worthiness is not a condition for the Lord's gifts)(۱) and Your gifts are unlimited. The door of Your mercy and favor is wide open and the table of Your boundless bounties is spread out. Give us a fervent heart and an arduous passion, a woeful heart and a tearful eye, a restless and impassioned mind and a breathless and fiery breast. Let the end of our live be in a state of sincere devotion to You and with the love of the elect of Your threshold, that is, those who represent the prologue of the book of being and the epilogue of the scrolls of the manifest and the Hidden, Muhammad and his immaculate kindred and progeny, may God's blessings be upon all of them

And to God belongs all Praise, firstly and lastly, outwardly and inwardly.

Concluded by the mortal hand of this indigent writer on Friday afternoon of the fourth of the month of Muharram al-Haram of the year ۱۳۵۸ H. [۱۹۳۹], and in God is my reliance and trust, at every commencement and conclusion.

p: ۱۰۳۹

۱- This is a reference to the following couplet from Rumi's Mathnawi (daftar ۵, bayt ۱۵۳۷). چاره آن دل عطاری مبدلیست داد اورا قابلیت شرط نیست

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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